



# BETTY BAIRD'S GOLDEN YEAR

ANNA HAMLIN WEIKEL







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BETTY BAIRD'S GOLDEN YEAR



*By Anna Hamlin Weikel*

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BETTY BAIRD

BETTY BAIRD'S VENTURES

BETTY BAIRD'S GOLDEN YEAR









SO IT WAS NOW, IN THIS SUMMER'S DAY, IN THIS OLD  
SOUTHERN GARDEN — *Frontispiece.* See Page 304



THE BETTY BAIRD SERIES

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# BETTY BAIRD'S GOLDEN YEAR

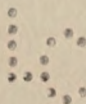
BY

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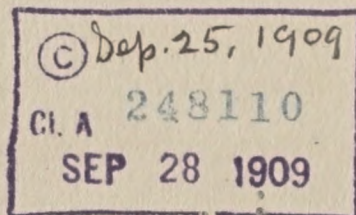


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So it was now, in this summer's day, in this old southern garden . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Like a lovely rainbow they formed in front of Lois . . . . .	<i>Page 80</i>
"Why, I thought you was a ghost!" she exclaimed . . . . .	<i>„ 139</i>
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# *Betty Baird's Golden Year*

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## I

### COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE

BETTY was quiet as a dormouse. She had drawn the old chintz-covered sofa to the window at the back of the big hall and, perched on its edge, had not lifted her eyes for an hour from the folio of engravings slanted on the sill. Gradually, however, she realized that the ancient Scottish castles were growing dim, so, breathing a sigh of relaxation, she clasped her hands behind her head and fell to dreaming about the strange legends she had been reading.

For a long time Betty looked out into the quiet garden. A large snowball bush grew near the window, and its blossoms were beginning to nod in the freshening breeze.



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"You dear little faces!" said Betty, suddenly. She leaned forward and patted the soft balls. In the witching twilight they seemed like shy but curious children peeping in at her through the open window.

"Why, Cousin Betty, are n't you trying your eyes?" came a small shocked voice.

"You, Wise One!" Then Betty, disentangled from her dreams, sat upright, and, smoothing down her bright rumpled hair, was prepared for those polite practicalities which were always uppermost in the mind of nine-year-old Edwyna.

The little cousin ran over to Betty and, throwing herself down by her side, snuggled up close to her.

"Edwyna, I have just returned from Scotland!" Betty announced gravely, tilting the tiny head backwards and kissing both cherry-red cheeks.

"Did you have a pleasant trip, Cousin Betty?" asked the child, in her most affable make-believe tone.

"Such a time!" breathed Betty, giving Edwyna a hug. "I have found a perfectly fascinating legend in this book, all about the



Bairds and their castle. See!" she went on, pointing out the engraving of the Baird castle. "Don't you remember that only last week I told you about Thomas the Rhymer, who married the Queen of the Fairies and went with her to Fairyland? And that was hundreds and hundreds of years ago! You remember the ballad says: —

"O they rade on and farther on,  
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,  
And they saw neither sun nor moon,  
But they heard the roaring o' the sea.  
"It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,  
And they waded through red blude aboon the knee,  
For a' the blude that's shed on earth,  
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.'"

Edwynna bounced up and down on the sofa and hugged herself delightedly at the sanguinary description, and Betty continued:

"He stayed there seven years and learned soothsaying. Then he came back and lived on the Tweed, and made a great many prophecies, among them this one about the Bairds, about Us, THE BAIRDS! Listen!"

Betty bent close to the book and read impressively:



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“‘As long as the Bairds live in the castle of Auchmeddon, so long will the eagles inhabit the crags thereof!’ What do you think of that, Edwyna?”

Edwyna's black eyes gleamed and she gripped Betty's hands. Satisfied that she had fallen into the spirit of the tradition, Betty continued to read:

“‘Thrice did the eagles flee the castle when it fell into alien hands, and thrice did they return to their ancient aeries when the name of Baird and the blood of the Bairds came back at last to their own!’ Oh, Edwyna, can you guess why those eagles did this?”

Edwyna shook her head thoughtfully, though her eyes did not leave Betty's face for an instant.

“The old chronicler does n't say nor even seem to wonder why,” pondered Betty, turning again to the open volume. But the letters were now blurred in the twilight. “What was the bond between the Bairds and the eagles? Can't you see the eagles perched up there on their rocks, looking down on those old square towers of the castle? And, oh, —” Betty's sweet voice thrilled with sympathy,



and her words were unconsciously tinged with the old chronicler's style,—“can't you see them soaring securely round and round the turrets? Suddenly all is changed! Their instinct tells them that the race they love has gone from its ancient home. Do they follow? Or do they become wanderers, too homesick to live without the Bairds?”

“I think they follow the Bairds,” said Edwynna, under her breath.

“So do I! Just think of their loyalty, their despairing leave-taking, their joyful home-coming!”

“Perhaps, Cousin Betty, once upon a time a Baird saved an eagle's life, and that's why they love them.”

“Good! That may be the very reason!” exclaimed Betty. “And because of that, they are the guardians of the family. Or they may be the transmigrated souls of proud chieftains, returned in this form to guard their descendants.”

“Are you going to buy the castle, Cousin Betty?” asked Edwynna, with flattering seriousness.

“I'm afraid I have n't yet saved enough



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in my little iron home-missionary bank," answered Betty. She gave Edwyna's lemon-colored hair-ribbon a tweak, then bent to one side to see the effect. "It would certainly be missionary work to buy a home for those poor eagles," she added, smiling to herself at Edwyna's rapt face.

They were silent for a few moments, Betty thinking of the legend, while Edwyna was enchanted with the long new word she had heard Betty use.

The venerable Frisian clock on the wall, with an abrupt falling of its heavy brass weight, struck six.

"Six!" Betty's voice showed her surprise.

"Cousin Betty, what was that word you used, something about 'grated?" Edwyna spoke hesitatingly, torn between her love for a sounding word and her fear of the customary bantering.

"My polysyllabic cousin, that word was trans-mi-grat-ed," syllabicated Betty, laughingly, squeezing Edwyna's hand at each hyphen.

"But what does trans-mi-grat-ed mean?" persisted Edwyna.



"You don't mean to tell me that a big girl like you does n't know what a little word like 'transmigrated' means?" teased Betty. "Why, it is n't more than half as long as you are yourself."

"Please! *Please*, Cousin Betty! It sounds like that word about birds going South in the fall."

"That's a fine beginning. But run to the dictionary, child."

"I don't believe you know yourself," pouted Edwyna, while Betty took this opportunity to close her book and hum cheerfully the opening bars of "Annie Laurie."

Edwyna soon caught her hand and interrupted in a whisper, because a whisper seemed more polite when interrupting:

"I forgot to tell you that dinner would be ready exactly at six instead of half-past."

"Oh, then we must migrate to the dining-room at once!" cried Betty, springing up. "I'll help you look up that word this very evening. It's lucky this old clock's fast!"

Singing and laughing, stumbling too, because they would not look where they were walking, simply out of the irrationality of



pure high spirits, they reached the dining-room and opened the door suddenly. Dazzled by their plunge into the brilliant light after the darkness of the hall, they covered up their eyes and clutched each other frantically, as they ran against some object on their heedless way.

“Oh, how dear it is!” Betty exclaimed, opening her eyes and taking in with a swift glance the fine damask, the thin silver, the fragile white and gold china, all handed down in her mother's family.



## II

### MANY A TRUE WORD SPOKEN IN JEST

“**A**RE we late, mother mine?” asked Betty, as Mrs. Baird came into the dining-room, sorting a handful of yellow flowers for the table.

“No, child. Run up to the study and call your father before he’s too much absorbed in his writing. We are having dinner early, so that he can attend a meeting at the manse. Now, Edwyna, dear, set the chairs around the table.”

Betty flew up the stairs and soon reappeared with her father. They walked arm-in-arm down the spacious staircase into the room, a bit of dinner ceremony that the dignified clergyman always expected of his impulsive daughter.

After the soup Mrs. Baird said:

“Since we are pressed for time, Betty, you and Edwyna may help to bring in the dinner.”



"Come, Edwyna, 'bound as to the tabor's sound,' " Betty cried, and she whisked the child into the kitchen, almost upsetting jovial old Katie, the ancient cook, who seemed to have been handed down with the family silver from Mrs. Baird's home, so many years had she and her mother served there.

"You two chillun do beat de band," she protested, grinning broadly. Then with the silver meat platter heaped with fried chicken held up firmly in both hands, she shuffled in. She nodded her red and yellow turbaned head approvingly, with a self-satisfied smile, as she glanced down at the savory dish. On her way to the kitchen she halted at the door to catch the Doctor's look of approval.

She had scarcely disappeared when Betty, bearing imitatively a glass dish of quivering cranberry jelly and another with a creamy cone of mashed potatoes, and Edwyna, with a platter of crisp brown corn pone, came in, and flanked the meat plate with their burdens. The mimic serving was so true to the model that Mrs. Baird laughingly asked Betty if she was "never going to grow up." Yet as she looked into the frank beautiful eyes that held



the warmth and joy of springtime, her longing to keep her a child belied her pleasant chiding.

"Never, I fear, Carissima," acquiesced Betty, cheerfully. "I don't feel any more equal now to being eighteen than I did at fourteen."

Immediately after grace, during which, it must be confessed, her large black eyes peeped hungrily at the chicken, Edwyna piped up, pointing to a bowl of daffodils in the centre of the table:

"Dottie brought those flowers over, Uncle William."

"Dottie is very kind," the Doctor said, halting his fork in mid-air as he looked carefully at the flowers. "I think the Ellsworths always have the finest of everything in their garden."

"Craig's scientific gardening is paying him at last," said Betty, with pride in her boy friend's achievements. "He's been helping me on Saturdays, when home from Columbia, and next year we'll have all the early earthy things we need right out of our own kitchen garden."



"Aunt Helen, you don't know what Cousin Betty is going to do now," exulted Edwyna, with knowing eyes and a demure smile.

Mrs. Baird smilingly shook her head.

"Wait until dessert, little Edwyna," she suggested, "then we shall have more time. I can hardly believe it is another venture."

Everybody laughed, Betty most of all. Nevertheless, down in their hearts, her parents appreciated very tenderly what Betty was trying to do.

It was simply the old story. Doctor Baird, after twenty-five years in the ministry, had bought this small farm on Long Island to be near his work as one of the assistant secretaries of the Home Mission Board. The heavy mortgage on it was held by a man who constantly threatened foreclosure if the interest was not paid on the very day it was due.

These conditions had thrust upon Betty the problem of fitting herself to put her shoulder to the wheel, as a son might do, and help her father to lift the mortgage. She had no thought of a career. Doctor Baird belonged to the old school, and it was painful to him to think of his daughter starting out



as a bread-winner. Yet his increasing ill-health and the inevitable superannuation were constantly before him, and it seemed wiser to allow Betty, while still young, to attempt to make herself independent.

In the beginning her modest ventures had, it is true, failed one after another, but finally a way was opened. After a series of experiences, the most trying of which was her deposal by the rich Mr. Webbie from the village librarianship to make room for one of his distant relatives, Betty had found her niche in Miss Minturne's Studio of Design, in New York. This position had been offered to her through the good offices of her old schoolmate, Mary Livingstone, who was a senior at 'The Pines' when Betty was a worshipping freshman there. Mary had married a Mr. King, and was now living on their large estate on the outskirts of Hobart, not far from Betty's home.

Miss Minturne was a woman of wealth and wide social influence and, withal, an original character who had determined to abandon dinners and receptions and to have a life work, as her brothers had. Being indefatigable herself, her nervous energy kept everybody around



her in a whirlwind of activity, yet her nature was so generous and inspiring that hard work in her company proved a delight.

Betty found interior decoration thoroughly congenial. Not only was she fitted for it by rare judgment and discriminating taste, but also, during her three years at 'The Pines,' she had been thrown much into the company of one of the teachers, Miss Greene, whose hobby was decoration. From her Betty, fortunately, as it turned out, received a fairly comprehensive course in the art before she took up its detailed study. She thus began without that fumbling that comes from undertaking a work for which Nature has not cut one out. She did not go against the grain.

Betty's friends thought that since one client had accepted her plans for decorating a library — with, it is true, Miss Minturne's advice and supervision — all would be plain sailing. But those who knew saw that it was only the start in the long toilsome race for success. There would not be a Dosworth Memorial Library every week or month. No. Week after week and month after month of studying, designing, planning, and writing out specifications



for Miss Minturne, had to come in, with that deadly monotony of routine that characterizes all pursuits, and take all her time and thought before she received another commission.

Fortunately her mind burnished with its own youth the long days, the inevitable disappointments, the prosaic details. She steadily refused to dwell on the dark side of her experiences, and gayly diffused her own hopeful views and created an atmosphere of cheerfulness for herself and others.

“Dangerously near a grumble!” was a favorite expression of Betty’s when she found herself lingering on the failures. Then she would brush aside the subject and begin a merry story. She realized that the will to be cheerful and to make others cheerful grows with its exercise in just such apparent trifles as depressing or hopeful conversation.

Presently Katie brought in the dessert, ice-cream moulded in the shape of a swan. The swan design was Edwyna’s special delight.

“Please, I want the head, Aunt Helen,” she whispered confidentially.

The dismemberment began, and Mrs. Baird turned to Betty.



"Now, Betty, let us hear about Edwyna's secret."

"She has a big bee in her bonnet this time, Aunt Helen," said Edwyna, importantly, her eyes dancing with excitement. She delighted in Betty's air-castles, and here was a real one in Scotland.

"No, Wise One, not a bee, but an *eagle* in my Scotch bonnet," replied Betty, with a great show of haughtiness and an elegant flourish of her dessert spoon.

"What does this all mean, Elizabeth?" asked her father, looking questioningly from one to the other.

"I've been studying that splendid book of engravings Mr. Anstice gave me at Christmas. It's all about Scottish castles, and oh, father, there's a Baird castle shown in it, and an enchanting legend about eagles that live in the crags near it only while the Bairds remain the owners of the castle." Then Betty told about True Thomas's prophecy.

"They certainly are very particular eagles. Evidently they know when the society is good," laughed Mrs. Baird.

"The castle is for sale now," Betty went on,



with increasing animation. "How I wish we could buy it! I don't believe it would cost much, for it is small and tumble-down, and anyhow, castles in Scotland are as common as thistles, bluebells, and heather," she wound up merrily.

"I should like very much to see the castle," said Mrs. Baird, her fine motherly face showing her sympathy with Betty's enthusiasm. "It 's a charming prophecy, far more attractive than those commonly associated with old houses. It makes me think of St. Francis of Assisi and his saying, 'My brother, the bird.'"

"You've heard something about the Baird eagles, have n't you, father?" asked Betty, turning hopefully to him.

"I have given very little thought to genealogy, and I do not know much about my family, though I do remember hearing my grandmother say that seven tall Baird brothers came from Scotland two centuries or more ago and settled in different parts of this country."

"Oh, father, do remember more!" she pleaded, squeezing the hand with which he drummed thoughtfully on the table. "I'd



love so to be related to that prophecy — and to Sir Walter! You know The Rhymer's Glen is at Abbotsford. I've just been reading in Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter — which you made me begin — that he took an especial interest in families that had romantic legends connected with their name or house. He'd love this eagle prophecy. Why, of course he knew it! He must have!"

Betty's mobile, winsome face showed the varying expressions of hero worship, of love of legendary romance, and clinging to her girlish dreams. She leaned forward, her light curling hair touching her father's iron-gray head, her dark eyes searching his thin scholarly face with the feeling that she just had to make him remember his family's Scottish home.

"I regret, for your sake, my child, that I have not taken more interest in my pedigree. Now your mother could tell you all about the Bairds if she were in my place," he wound up, smiling quizzically across the table at his wife.

"Yes, I could," averred Mrs. Baird, smiling back her appreciation of a perennial family joke. "You know they say Shintoism is



ancestor worship. Well, then, my Shinto shrine is that big olive-wood box there on the mantelpiece, with my family's history."

"That's the very first thing I'll grab if this house catches fire," said Betty, enjoying her mother's joke.

"Are you sure you would n't take the picture of your Scottish castle instead? Your mother's ancestors lived in mere houses, not castles," said her father, slyly.

Betty chuckled at the hit, but defended herself spiritedly.

"Really, father, there's no snobbery in wanting this little tiny romantic thing in my life. It makes — well, even *commuting* pleasanter to have this to think about! It's only — I don't know what, but I'd give a fortune —"

"Do you mean your pickles, your marmalade, your —"

Betty's slim right hand stopped Edwyna's pretty, pert mouth.

"To think of a genuine Grinling Gibbons cherub talking like that!" she lamented, though dimples persisted in coming to her cheeks to keep company with the mischievous twinkle in her bonny eyes.



Edwynna indignantly jerked her head to one side.

"Why not go over there and try your name on those eagles?" said her father, jestingly. "That would be a test as to whether or not you are the right brand of Baird."

"Now, father, you know what I mean. It would be *living* poetry to go over there and see that castle, buy it, hear the eagles scream, know they knew us, see their nests, the heather, the plaids, hear the hurdy-gurdy —"

"You can hear the hurdy-gurdy almost any day in New York," laughed her father.

Betty joined in the laugh. She could always enjoy a joke, even at her own expense.

Then he continued: "We shall find it rather difficult to live poetry in this age. However, I do believe in an avocation, even a hobby, to lighten our vocation, and since you are interested in this legend, Elizabeth, I will try to recall more about my people's history. In our old homestead in Pennsylvania there were bald eagles in plenty among the rocks of the Alleghanies, and it was a neighborhood saying that they came there when the Bairs did, though what gave rise to the idea I cannot say."



Betty almost jumped from her chair.

"There! I felt it in my very bones that we were the eagle Bairds." Her eyes sparkled at this confirmation of her hopes.

"Perhaps there are no bald eagles in Scotland," suggested Mrs. Baird, smiling at Betty's enthusiasm.

"I remember the eagles very distinctly," resumed the Doctor, now warmed up to the idea, as he looked into the depths of his cup. "My grandmother, and later my mother, were in the greatest terror lest the eagles should carry off the little children. Some day, Betty, I want to take you to my old home, though I fear there will be nothing left as it was except the old mountain and the trout brook."

The Doctor lost himself in pleasant memories.

"How long has it been since you were in your old home, father?" asked Betty, her tender heart and quick imagination touched by the longing in her father's voice. It was this warm sympathy that made Betty seem every one's contemporary.

"I was your age, Elizabeth, when I left



there; and every year I've planned to go back on a visit — that is, of late years."

"Why could n't we go in your vacation in August?" suggested Betty, buoyantly.

Doctor Baird looked up quickly, and his brown eyes lost their meditative look and brightened like his daughter's, as if he, too, liked to "live poetry."

"Why, we could do that," he admitted.

Betty clapped her hands. "Good! We'll camp out and be as wild at Indians, and maybe," she laughed, "we'll find our own true eagles."

"By the way," said Mrs. Baird, after expressing her gratification over this summer plan, "did n't Lois write that her father was going to Scotland this summer? Perhaps he will find out something about your eagles."

"Oh, he would! Is n't it too good to be true that Lois is coming so soon!"

"Dear Lois; it's a long time since we've seen her," said Mrs. Baird, smiling tenderly at the thought of the young girl.

"Little did I think," said Betty, playing absently with her tiny coffee spoon, "when I was so homesick at 'The Pines,' and every girl



in the school seemed to hate me, and Lois Byrd came as my roommate, that for five years we should be like sisters!”

“We old people are falling into reminiscences,” laughed Doctor Baird, moving his chair so he could cross his knees, and turning to look out into the garden, where a new moon was making a faint glimmer through the Lombardy poplars.

“Do I belong to the Bairds?” asked Edwyna, suddenly. She had not spoken for some time, having evidently retired from the conversation to ponder the part she held in this prophecy.

“Of course you do, Edwyna Baird Innes.”

“Then if — if —” Edwyna paused for a moment. Betty saw by the determined gleam in her eye that she had found an opportunity to air an addition to her famous vocabulary, and proceeded to egg her on.

“Yes, Edwyna? You were about to make a remark?” she encouraged her, turning to her with elaborate courtesy.

“If pro-pink-itty” — Edwyna sighed softly as the word came slowly from her strained lips — “would do, we might build a house



near the eagles' rocks, if the castle costs too much for us to buy."

"That sounds like a very practical idea," said Doctor Baird, smiling, as he patted Edwyna's small dark head and pushed his chair back from the table.

"That won't do, Edwyna, dear," protested Betty, her eyes twinkling with fun. "You can't cajole eagles with pro-pink-itty. It says, 'As long as the Bairds live in the castle,' not near it."

"Cousin Betty will surely go over and become a trans-mi-grated eagle herself," giggled Edwyna, in revenge.

Betty gave a little shriek, which was covered by the sound of their chairs as they rose from the table to go to the side porch, where it was their evening custom to stand a while and look out at the night.

"Who knows," said Mrs. Baird, cheerily, as she took Betty's hand and placed it in her arm, while Edwyna hung to Betty's arm with both hands, "who knows but that the eagles may come here when they leave their old home, if we are of the true fold!"

"Well," said Betty, laughing, "it would be



a pretty long flight, even for the Baird eagles. But I shall be on the lookout from this time forward, henceforth, and forever! My fate is linked with theirs!"

"‘Many a true word is spoken in jest,’" returned her mother, pleasantly, "but I am afraid I can't see how you and your eagles are ever going to become acquainted."



### III

#### THE PICNIC ON PAULDING'S POINT

“**L**OIS is really here!” was Betty’s first thought that morning; the second, “How shall we celebrate?”

She pulled aside the curtain. The breeze that came in was mild and filled with the odors of early spring. The sun was shining brightly on the bay.

“A row ’s the thing!”

So, after a brisk discussion, the girls decided to mark this red-letter day by rowing down to the inlet. They flew out to the boat-house right after breakfast, then down to the boat, laden with oars, cushions, oarlocks, wooden scoop, sponge, and a basket of luncheon. The boat, which had been put into the water only the day before, had leaked a good deal, but they went energetically to work with scoop and sponge, and soon had it dry as a bone.

Lois’ dropped into her old seat in the stern, and Betty, standing up with an oar in



her hand, pushed away from the little wharf. Then she sat down and, adjusting the oars in the locks, began to pull towards the inlet, rowing easily in time with their talk, for they had many months of separation to bridge over.

Both girls were tall, slender, and graceful, but there the resemblance stopped. Lois had dark hair and a clear olive skin, while Betty's light brown hair glinted like gold in the sun, and her cheeks were as delicately tinted as a rose leaf.

They were unlike, too, in more than looks. Betty, buoyant, humorous, high-spirited, her feet steadily refusing to cross a bridge until they came to it, was always seeing the bright side of life. Lois, while usually light-hearted, was serious and inclined to be apprehensive. Both were loyal and true.

Betty's work was soon the topic of their conversation.

"Miss Minturne is not herself," said Betty, thoughtfully, as she gently feathered her oars.

"Miss Minturne! What can be the matter? Is she ill?" asked Lois, anxiously.

"No-o-o —"



"Is n't she the same to you? Is she — are n't you — don't you give —"

Lois stumbled along, then ended helplessly.

Betty rested on her oars, with the dripping blades poised in the air, and laughed gayly at her friend's anxiety.

"You dear old Mentor, Guide, and Friend!" she mocked, bending to her oars and making the boat spin through the water.

"Call me what you please, mentor or meddler, but it would be dreadful if you did n't give —"

"It would be 'dreadful,' but it is n't. If you will beat about the bush, I assure you that I do give 'perfect satisfaction' to my employer."

"Betty, you are so hopeful!" said Lois, plaintively.

"There it goes! I wonder why so many people say that to me with such disapproval. Why is it?" Betty demanded, looking a trifle nettled.

"Well," said Lois, half laughing, "I suppose it seems wiser to apprehensive people to be on the lookout for trouble, and optimistic people strike them as — as — shiftless. But I am frightened, Bet," persisted Lois. "You



had so much trouble with your ventures until you found your present place, then everything seemed so pleasant."

"Everything is pleasant. Why, Lois, Miss Minturne and I just love each other, and we agree perfectly in our work," answered Betty, in a tone that carried conviction.

"You darling old Betty! I might have known better. But how is she different? You are dreadfully unsatisfactory."

"It's downright hard to say, even to you, Lois, that a woman I love and admire is — well, yes, snappy at times!"

"Snappy! That's strange. She's always been so agreeable, even if she is a little eccentric. Excuse me for saying it."

"Why, Miss Minturne is only beautifully original, not eccentric. But lately she has been treating even Mr. Anstice terribly."

"Queer! I thought she and Mr. Anstice were such great friends."

"They always have been," replied Betty, letting the boat drift and sinking her chin into her two palms. "I can't understand it. Lately she's been acting as if he were her worst enemy."



Lois looked at Betty as though trying to read in her eyes a solution of the problem that interested them both deeply, for Miss Minturne filled a large place in their hearts. Then a light broke over her face.

"Why, Betty," she exclaimed, "I have it! She 's in love with Mr. Anstice!"

"In love! Miss Minturne!! Mr. Anstice!!!"

"What a crescendo of surprise! He 's been in love with her for a long time, you know that. Now, she 's either in love with him or she 's not in love with him. If she 's in love with him —"

Betty clapped her hands over her ears and shook her head, laughing.

"Lois, you make me dizzy with your logic and your 'in loves.' But how would that explain —"

"Her being snappy? Snappiness is one of the surest signs of love," Lois declared, with immense sophistication.

Betty again dropped her chin into the palms of her hands, and stared out towards the horizon, while Lois fell into an abstraction that seemed to hold disquietude.

"It 's certainly a great undertaking for a



woman of her age," at last said Lois, sagely, leaning forward and sponging up some water that had leaked into the boat.

"Yes, we young things could manage so much better," teased Betty, resuming her oars.

"I mean that she 's happy now," Lois explained, "and they have entirely different temperaments, and it seems to me it would be better to let well enough alone."

"Miss Minturne is talking of taking a trip soon. I do believe that she 's running away from herself. Maybe she is in love with him, but she 's not satisfied," said Betty, eagerly, now wholly in sympathy with Lois's surmise. "She finds herself weighing things practically, and that disappoints her. He 's wild over her, and that pleases her, and she wants to be wild over him — oh!"

The "oh!" was thrown up like a break-water, to stop the impetuous flow of her words.

"Lois, it 's wretched taste to be discussing this," she finished.

"Yes, especially when it 's all guesswork. Yet —"

"I wish it was n't such fun to discuss people



and their affairs," broke in Betty, smiling ruefully.

In her turn she now began to bail out the water, which was taking advantage of their inattention. Straightening up, her face flushed from the exertion, Betty waved the red wooden scoop enthusiastically around.

"Is n't it good, Lois! Are n't you glad to be back?"

"Could n't be gladder, Betty," answered Lois. She glanced furtively at Betty's bright sweet face as the fair head bobbed up and down while she mopped the bottom of the boat with the sponge. She knew Betty would read her thoughts if she looked her full in the face. And Lois's thoughts were not happy. With Miss Minturne married what would become of the Studio of Design — and of Betty!

"Now, Lois, I 'm going to give you a correct imitation of a race against the world's record. In four minutes, twenty-seven and two-fifths seconds, I 'll land you at the old lighthouse on Paulding's Point. Ever since we 've lived here we 've been wanting to see that old lighthouse, and now is our chance. Steer straight for it."



Settling herself on the thwart, getting her feet well braced against the stretcher, and taking a fresh grip on her oars, Betty bent to her work and made the boat cut through the water at a rate that would have done credit to a boy of her age.

The bow soon grated on the sandy beach of the Point, and the girls scrambled out, Betty dragging the light grapnel anchor some distance from the water, while Lois took the cushions and luncheon.

Walking briskly towards the tiny white cottage at the foot of the towering granite lighthouse, Betty rapped timidly on the door, saying in an aside to Lois:

“I wonder if they ’ll object to visitors.”

The door was opened by an elderly, gray-haired, yet vigorous-looking woman, who surveyed them sharply.

“Please excuse us,” said Betty, “but would it be possible for us to see the lighthouse?”

The woman glanced from one to the other, then, without answering, turned and went into a rear room.

“Karl!” they heard her call out, evidently to some one upstairs. “A couple o’ gals want to see the light.”



Heavy steps at once began to pound down the stairs, and presently Karl appeared, a tall, robust fellow, with the appearance and manner of a seafaring man.

"This way," was all he said, and led them to the light tower. Entering through a heavy oak door, they followed their guide up the narrow winding stone stairs, lit here and there by slits of windows in the wall. In the little room at the top of the tower they found an old, white-bearded, taciturn-looking man.

"Dad, these young wimmin want to see the light," Karl announced, and disappeared hastily.

The father greeted them with a kindly though absent-minded glance, and proceeded to explain, with much pride, the workings of the light, the composition of the lenses, the steam siren for foggy weather, the hand-bell kept in reserve in case the siren should get out of order, and related many interesting incidents of his thirty years' service there.

Delighted with what they had seen and heard, the girls thanked the keeper heartily and made their way down the stairs and back towards their boat.



Lois was some distance in advance, as Betty had stopped to examine a boating party that was rowing a little way out from the shore.

“Betty, oh, Betty!” she heard Lois wail; and seeing her look of alarm, she flew to the boat, at which Lois was pointing in dismay.

“Why — why!” Betty could get no farther, but dropped down on the sand and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks. Their boat, which had not been in the water long enough to close the cracks opened by the winter, had filled with water to within a few inches of the gunwales, and oars and scoop and sponge were floating around in it with the greatest abandon.

“Lois, we’re marooned!” said Betty, cheerfully.

“We can hardly ask the lighthouse people to help us, can we?” debated Lois.

“Son Karl could help us. I’m sure he’d love to play knight-errant to ‘a couple o’ gals.’ Just think, Lois, after all we’ve read about knights, we must be rescued by *Karl*,—

Karl, the Keeper of the Light,  
Karl, the hardy salt-sea Knight!”



"One man alone —" began Lois.

"That 's true," interrupted Betty. "Only *one* knight! Too bad!"

Lois could not resist the contagion of Betty's light spirits, and she, too, soon took a humorous view of their situation.

"And of course, Lois," Betty pursued, "even one man would have no trouble at all in emptying our boat. Then, too, I know the Kings pass this point every day. And Jack has his launch in commission now, and it's likely he'll come by water instead of in his car on his way to see you. He can tow our boat. Dunny is pretty sure to be with him or —"

Betty jumped up, snatched a cushion, and tore down to the water's edge.

"What are you going to do?" Lois cried, and flew after her.

"Wig-wag," she called back, as she waved the cushion madly at a passing launch. But its occupants paid no attention.

"I thought it was the Mortons' boat," said Betty, as she stepped hastily back out of reach of the waves from the launch, which began to break on the yellow sand.

Instead of getting out their dainty luncheon,



they sat down and dabbled aimlessly with the sand, and tried to talk. But their eyes turned continually towards the inlet. All at once Betty sprang to her feet and began to wave her pillow frantically, while Lois fluttered her veil in one hand and her handkerchief in the other, both calling out:

“Jack! Jack! The Water Witch aho—o—o—y!”

This time their signals were noticed, for Jack appeared on the deck and swung his cap swiftly in great semicircles.

“Hello, Betty! What’s up? Glad to see you, Lois. Be there in a jiffy.”

He turned and gave a command to his helmsman, and the launch swung in a sharp curve towards the point. It came to anchor a short distance off shore, and Jack was rowed ashore in the dinghy.

“Dunny must be with the Kings,” said Betty in an undertone. “He won’t wait a minute to come to see you, Lois.”

Jack stood up in the stern and saluted the girls gallantly.

“Welcome home, Lois!” he called.

Lois returned his welcome cordially and said to Betty in a whisper:



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"He's handsomer than ever! Perfectly stunning!"

"Yes, the same old Jack. Always in a good humor with himself and everybody else. And it's just splendid that he stands so high in his class at Harvard! Shall we go to his commencement, or to Dunny's at Yale?" Betty asked, glancing slyly at Lois.

"Oh, both, of course!" parried Lois.

With a tidying jerk at her necktie, which hung from the wide collar of her dark-blue sailor suit, Betty ran down to the boat.

"Hello, Betty! Hello, Lois! Tickled to death to see you!" cried Jack, as he stepped ashore and seized both of Lois's hands in his vigorous grasp. "But what has happened to your boat?" he asked in surprise.

Betty explained, and Jack directed his man to bail it out. In a short time the boat was fixed up "ship-shape and Bristol fashion," according to Jack.

"Let's have some luncheon," proposed Betty. "Up there on the hill is a table made of a board fastened to two tree stumps. We can eat and watch for the Kings at the same time."



“Dunny ’s with them,” said Jack, taking the basket and scrambling up to the table. The girls followed with the cushions.

They had just spread out the napkins and placed the sandwiches, cheese, olives, and chocolate cake on plates, when Jack abruptly dropped the basket, made a megaphone of his hands to hail a passing boat, then rushed down to the shore.

“It ’s the Kings’ launch. Dunny’s there in the bow, and they ’ve spied us,” cried Betty, as they ran breathlessly down the hill after Jack.

After the first friendly confusion of welcoming Lois back — for though Mrs. King was several years older than the two friends, she had a warm affection for them both; and Lois was the first girl to attract big, generous, straightforward Dunny Lane — the idea of a picnic was developed, and Mrs. King sent to the launch for a hamper of provisions, including a large, thick, juicy beefsteak.

The boys made a fireplace with stones, and built a clear, sparkling fire of driftwood, at which Betty broiled the steak.

“Brave Betty Baird!” applauded King,



who was devoting himself assiduously to the task of encouraging all around him to work.

"Jack, more kindling! The fire 's going down," Betty called in a quick tone.

"A perfect crosspatch, like all cooks!" grumbled Jack, as he shuffled off with a sly wink at Dunny. "I 'm the only soul here earning his beefsteak with the sweat of his brow," he growled, as he carefully mopped his forehead, on which there was not a sign of perspiration. "But before I 'd be such a Miss Nancy as *him!*" pointing to where Lois was teaching Dunny to set the table.

Mary King lamented loudly that her incorrigible husband would do nothing but hang over a clear cold spring, which he insisted he had discovered, though a barrel had been sunk deep around it long before, and a tin cup hung hospitably on a nail in the barrel.

"Take this a minute, Jack, but mind your p's and q's." Betty thrust the broiler into his hands and skipped off to get butter, salt, and pepper. In a second every one was rushing madly from all quarters towards the fire, for a distressing odor of burnt meat met them, half starved as they declared themselves.



Betty snatched the sizzling toaster from Jack's limp hand, while all chaffed him unmercifully for his lack of skill.

"Another Alfred the Great!" he moaned, melodramatically, and he threw himself down on a log and hid his face in his hands.

Betty scraped the cinders off the meat, which was none the worse for its fiery bath, and, escorted by Jack, carried it to the table.

"Everybody fall to!" cried King, heartily, setting the example.

"Ply a good knife and fork!" urged Jack in a muffled tone, that showed that he was not shirking his own part.

To the accompaniment of merry chatter and much "airy persiflage," as King called it, the last scrap disappeared. Then King rose.

"Jack, old man, your health! You're certainly a great hand at rescuing girls from perilous positions." He held aloft his battered tin cup with the cold spring water sweating it. "Here's to Jack Brooks, the life-saving hero! May he soon wear his Carnegie medal!" he cried.

All sprang to their feet and raised their cups on high.



"May his shadow never grow less!" said Dunny, pounding him affectionately on the shoulder-blades.

Betty and Lois laid their hands on their hearts and made profound bows, saying their gratitude was too deep for words.

Delighted with the good fun of this unexpected picnic, the little party voted to have another at the inlet very soon. As they discussed it, however, the plan gradually gave way to another, proposed by Betty, — a May Party at the Bairds' home, to welcome Lois.

"You're not supposed to hear anything about this, Lois," said Dunny. "Let's get out of the way."

"Bless you, my children! Go!" Jack waved them off with uplifted hands.

The plans for the May Party were made, it was understood, subject to Mrs. Baird's approval.

"You can bank on Mrs. Baird every time, when it comes to welcoming Lois and providing fun for kids," commented Jack.

Betty and Mrs. King decided first that Lois should be chosen Queen of the May, and that Betty should train Edwynna and her "set" —



as the child called her group of little girl friends — to sing an old May-day carol that was sung in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and to dance a May-pole Dance.

About this time Jack and Dunny remarked that they wanted a “grand hurrah” for Lois, that May-poles and Elizabethan Carols were all right, but as for them, they wanted some athletics, even if they had to be Elizabethan athletics.

To this the girls agreed, so the boys decided on archery and bowling on the green for the young people, croquet for the elderlies, and battledore and shuttlecock for the youngsters, and refreshments, said they, for all and plenty of 'em.

“Boys are never happy without something to eat,” laughed Mrs. King.

“And girls, of course, never eat, do they?” retorted Jack.

A dance in the big hundred-year-old barn was settled on for the evening, and that seemed to suit all.

“Whom shall we invite?” asked Mrs. King.

“Everybody!” answered Betty, sweepingly.



The usually exclusive Mrs. King looked at her curiously for a minute, then smiled as she patted her hand affectionately.

"You dear old Betty!" she said softly. "Yes, everybody, as you say. Let's have everybody."

The list was made up on the spot. King fished around in his pockets for a while, and finally drew out a piece of paper and the stub of a lead-pencil, and wrote down the names.

The picnic party broke up early in the afternoon, Betty and Lois going home in the Kings' launch, with the leaky rowboat trailing ignominiously behind.



## IV

### THE COMMONPLACE BOOK

AS the four young people passed through the gate into the garden, Betty spied her old commonplace book on the bench under the cedar, "Betty's Nook in the Corner," as it was called. Indeed, every seat, tree, bush, or rock in "Boxwood" seemed to be named after some one. "Lois's Throne" was the quaint old horse-block beside the gate, under the twin fir trees. "Edwyna's Rock" held a commanding place on the left terrace, and nothing delighted her more than to sit on its rounding top and sing in her throaty way, evidently imagining herself a great prima-donna with the world at her feet.

"I've looked through my desk time and again for this," cried Betty, picking up the commonplace book, and dropping it into her lap as she sat down.

"Jack, please, give me one of your good lead-pencils," she added, holding up her hand.



"Lois, I am going to write out that prophecy about the Baird castle."

"When Betty looks as demure and humble as that, and speaks out her words so that you can actually see 'em in italics, you may be sure she's exploding with pride," laughed Jack, handing her his pencil with its well sharpened point.

"Ah, cruel world!" murmured Betty, trying hard to look aggrieved. She opened her book and, with a pensive air, began to write down the prophecy, while Lois related the tradition to Jack and Dunny.

"Why, Betty actually believes that about the eagles!" exclaimed Jack.

"Believe it!" Betty elevated her fine straight nose in affected surprise. "Of course I believe it. Oh, you *Americans* are so practical! Now we *Scotch* are more mystical." She turned with a superior air to her book.

"Ah, I see! Your friend Webbie is pure unadulterated Scotch, too, I believe," drawled Jack, significantly, as he sat down on the seat beside her.

Betty appeared too absorbed to notice, while Lois and Dunmore wandered off and



sat down on "Lois's Throne." They had much to talk over, for Dunny was about to graduate from Yale, and Lois had been traveling abroad during the winter months, with her father.

"Now, Betty, what in the world is the use of that thing?" asked Jack, pointing a slighting finger at the worn marbled cover of the commonplace book. "You can't possibly remember many of the quotations, so they can't help you much."

Betty gazed thoughtfully at it, making little dots on the page with her pencil.

"I love the book, Jack. My father gave it to me when I was a youngster, and started me to copying good things into it and memorizing them. So that I do know nearly all of them, really, Jack."

The contents of Betty's commonplace book showed that her ideals had changed, that her mind was opening to deeper thoughts, and her spirit striving for a fuller and more permanent sway. There were fewer and fewer merely graceful poems and selections, and more that related to moods and character, as if her year in the workaday world had shown her the



necessity of what might be called formal character building. In the words of one of her last entries, a genuine longing for "the grace of a cheerful heart, an even temper, sweetness, gentleness, and brightness," might be read between the lines of her later quotations.

"Well, Jack," she said presently, with a lingering look at the book, "I'm not so sure. And yet — But here's my latest: 'He had a nature as large as the whole world, yet there was not room enough for the memory of a wrong.' If every one was that way, would n't this be a delightful world to live in!"

"Oh, I don't know about that," considered Jack, doubtfully. "What snap would we have without our villains and our enemies? Why, the drama would have to go begging if foes became extinct!"

"Well, I'm charmed with the idea," said Betty, rereading the lines. "I've had my eyes opened to the unlovely fact that resentment, a quick resentment that does n't hang fire, though it's fiery enough, goodness knows, is my besetting sin."

"Oh, nonsense, Bet. You may be resentful enough when you think of that confounded



Webbie, and nobody could blame you," grumbled loyal Jack. "You have less resentment than most people."

"As Epictetus says, —" Betty read a line from her book, "'Let me be eaten by a lion, but not by' — a Webbie!" she ended, laughing. "Really, Jack, I think it would be perfectly lovely to have a heart as big as the world and no room for the memory of a wrong, the dramatists and Jack Brooks to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Oh, it sounds well enough. But you girls are rather transcendental."

"There it is! 'Transcendental'!" exclaimed Betty, up in arms at once. "Just as soon as a girl mentions something that is n't clothes or tennis or cards or dancing or golf or yachting, she's 'transcendental'!"

"My, oh, my, what a string of 'em! Take care, Betty; you may have a spark of resentment in your big heart!" Jack laughed good-humoredly.

Betty joined in the laugh. "Here's your pencil, Jack. Thank you. Come, I'll beat you at a game of tennis, and then we'll see what's in your 'big heart.'"



Putting down her book, Betty snatched up a racket that lay on the steps of the side porch and ran to the court, closely followed by Jack, while Lois and Dunmore followed more leisurely.



## V

### BETTY AND THE WEBBIES

BETTY had now an occasional afternoon free. Early this morning the mail brought a note from Mrs. King, asking her and Lois to go with them to the golf links. They would, she said, pick up Edith Banks and Gertrude Lynn on the way, and no doubt Jack and Dunmore would be there.

Edwynna, too, was invited, but she decided to go with her special playmate, Christine Stopford. Christine's father was an inveterate and skilful golf player, and both Edwynna and Christine felt that life would be more exciting if they tagged proudly after a real player, rather than strolled under trees or drank tea on the piazza, as Mrs. King did, and as Betty and Lois, being her guests, would of course be compelled to do; though, to be sure, they rarely left the field without playing a hole or two, at least, with the boys.



While the course was not particularly noted for its excellence, yet it offered compensation to the casual player in the loveliness of the wide reach of sky and the beautiful rolling fair greens, through the last of which a brook ran briskly, making a hazard that was the despair of beginners and the fearful joy of the initiated.

Mrs. King and her party wandered over the fields until they came to a rustic bench perched on a hilltop that overlooked the course and was pleasantly shaded by a clump of cherry trees. Mrs. King sank down on the bench, Dunny propped himself against one of the trees, while Jack and King threw themselves full length on the grass, Jack murmuring his one and unfailing quotation, "What 's so rare as a day in June?" at the same time keeping a watchful eye on King. But the party affected a stony deafness.

Before sitting down beside Mrs. King, Betty and Lois stood a moment to take a full view of the outspreading country. Gertrude Lynn, ever mindful of her clothes, sat down on a camp-chair which she had asked Dunny to carry from the Club House to protect her



new spring gown from the baleful effects of the dust on a bench out in the open. Edith had gone off, without ceremony, to play with some friends.

They all began to talk together, their tongues loosened by the fresh air and the animated scene, and were commenting admiringly on the skilful play of some club members who were driving down the green in front of them, when a hush fell on the gay little party. Betty, not knowing the cause, turned to Mary King and was about to speak, but Jack coughed significantly and remarked:

“Ahem! Betty, I see a friend of yours coming up the hill.”

Surprised by his tone, Betty swung round and saw Mr. and Mrs. Webbie walking confidently towards the group.

“‘Impeccable Webbie!’” Jack went on, his usually kind blue eyes glaring, as the little great man of the village and his youthful wife approached.

“Is it possible they have the nerve to come here after the way they treated Betty?” said King, looking at them with cold surprise.

“I shall turn my back on them, figuratively



of course," said Mary, with a disdainful shrug of her shoulders. "I simply can't endure snobs or bores. They are both."

"I shall escape instantly." King took Jack by the arm and dragged him away.

Mrs. Webbie greeted them effusively. It was her ambition to become a member of the younger set, of which Mary King was the leader. A second wife, she was much younger than her husband.

Mr. Webbie had not seen Betty since that evening in the library when he had urbanely commented on her "enviable youth," and had then proceeded to dismiss her to make room for a distant relative, who had had neither training nor experience and who did not need the position. He now bowed to her without a trace of embarrassment. The fact that he had turned Betty from a position which she was filling with pronounced success was only one of the numerous selfish acts that made up his life, from a boyhood of poverty to a middle age of wealth.

Betty had determined to forget the injustice, but her face now flushed with quick indignation at the memory of all the worry and



anxiety this pompous little man had caused them, and she bowed coolly in return to his wife's nod.

After nodding indifferently to Mrs. Webbie, Mrs. King turned her eyes languidly to the horizon, while Lois, too, seemed to find distant objects more congenial. Mrs. King, with the coolness of a woman of the world, could treat a pushing woman like this to a glance of amusement and a slight shrug of the shoulders, and then forget her. This treatment was now being accorded to immature Mrs. Webbie.

Her husband stood talking placidly on the light and trivial subjects a man of his calibre thinks appropriate to women, and was jingling his keys in his pocket.

The bench was large enough to hold only the three women, and though Betty had naturally stood up when the Webbies approached, she sat down again absently, and turned to watch Mr. Stopford and another club member who were passing. Seeing Edwyna and Christine following them, she waved her handkerchief, and they threw kisses to her in return.

It was not long, however, before she discovered Mary King's determination to ignore



the unwelcome callers. Though she knew it was on her account, Betty could not sit comfortably while the process was going on. Turning to look at Mary, she saw that though Lois was still standing, Mrs. Webbie evidently did not feel at liberty to occupy the vacant place without an invitation, and seeing the deepening look of mortification in her eyes, Betty's resentment took wing as suddenly as it had come.

"Mrs. Webbie, won't you take this seat?" she said, starting up impulsively and smiling at the embarrassed woman, who hardly knew how to act in view of Mrs. King's evident indifference.

"Thank you, Miss Baird," said Mrs. Webbie, but gazing expectantly at Mary.

"By the way, Bet," said Mary, paying no attention to Mrs. Webbie, "we must begin our game or the sun will go down on our" — she paused, laughing, and adding in a low voice, — "our wrath."

She stood up and, looking at Lois and including Mrs. Webbie carelessly in her glance, moved towards the first tee.

"I thought I saw Mr. King as I came up,"



Betty heard Mr. Webbie say, as he trotted off in an effort to keep pace with Mary's rapid steps. In his active business as a close self-corporation he had gained an unenviable thickness of skin, but his wife, who had perhaps received more telling discipline in pursuit of her social aspirations, could not conceal her chagrin.

Betty walked along at Mrs. Webbie's side, thinking:

"I can't just see why she should be punished for her husband's meanness."

Soothed by this thought, she kept up a lively conversation that soon restored Mrs. Webbie's self-complacency. She insisted that Betty should come over to see her, and remarked that she herself would drop in some day to see Betty when she had nothing else to do.

This last gracious and naïve assurance caused such a ripple of real merriment to pass over Betty's face that Lois wondered what the dull woman could be saying that was so humorous. Continuing, Mrs. Webbie mourned her inability to learn to play golf.

"And they do say it takes the flesh off



wonderful," she said regretfully, her shortness of breath, maybe, making her abbreviate her adverbs so painfully.

"Bet, you 're going to die young," whispered Mary. "I see you 'll never have much fun out of a fallen foe," she added, drawing Betty to one side, and leaving Mr. and Mrs. Webbie to go down the hill arm in arm.

"I know it," admitted Betty. "At least, not in cold blood."

Betty lacked that self-complacency that makes a girl hard on the faults or deficiencies of others, for she was thoroughly awake to the fact that she had plenty of her own. Yet she had a certain inflexible sense of justice which, though offset by her warm heart and generous spirit, made any lack of fair play, as in Mr. Webbie's treatment of her, hard to forgive. The backbone of Betty's character was fairness.

She was silent as they walked down the steep hill, her mind busy with this encounter.

"Come, Betty, girl," said Mary, "this 'rugged virtue' of yours is making you dull. Come over to the Club House and have a cup of that which 'cheers but does not inebriate.'"

As they followed the path that ran around



the side of a hill down to the Club House, they came across Jack, who, thinking Mary had certainly disposed of the Webbies, was returning trustingly to meet them, just in time to come face to face with Webbie.

"Why, how d' ye do, Mr. Brooks!" he said urbanely, and linking his arm in Jack's he trudged along, leaving his stout wife to follow breathless, red, and perspiring.

Betty looked after her pityingly. "Just think, Mary, how happy that poor soul would be on their veranda, fanning herself, drinking iced tea or lemonade, and talking with a congenial soul!"

"It's too ridiculous," said Mary, but with none of Betty's pity. "She comes here to be in the swim, not because she cares for golf. Why does n't she do what she cares for?"

In one corner of the broad veranda of the picturesque Club House, now crowded with members and their friends, they found Edith cosily drinking lemonade with Lois, Gertrude, and Dunny, who had managed to reach it by a roundabout route. Below them, on the well-rolled croquet ground, they could see Edwyna and Christine engrossed in a game,



while on the clay tennis courts the Club experts were engaged in a hotly contested match, encouraged by the applause of the spectators who lined the sides of the courts.

Jack soon joined the party. He had suffered the familiarity of the man he detested not a moment longer than courtesy demanded from a younger to an older man. His loyalty to Betty turned his carelessly good-natured treatment of people in general and bores in particular into an attitude of dignified reserve in this case.



## VI

### BETTY'S GOLDEN MINUTE

LATE the same afternoon, while Lois was writing to her father, Betty waited for her, cosily curled up in her window-seat, book in hand, and alternately read and watched Edwyna's roller-skate "cavortings" on the flag walk just under her window.

Mrs. Baird stopped as she passed the open door.

"Why, Betty," she exclaimed reproachfully, "look at your room! Your hat not put away, your coat on the bed! And your hair!"

Betty scrambled to her feet and drew her mother in.

"Now, mother, darling, just you sit on that comfortable seat while I explain. I washed my hair this morning, so I let everything else go."

Mrs. Baird looked puzzled.

"Have n't you time —" She stopped, at a loss.



"Oh, yes, plenty of time," answered Betty, nonchalantly. Her eyes were full of mirth as she glanced around the room, with the papers, books, and coat and hat scattered about on tables and chairs. "But, mother, I just can't keep my hair up. The pins are always dropping out; and, somehow, when my hair acts that way it takes away all my sense of responsibility. It does n't seem to make any difference whether school keeps or not!" ended Betty, as if clenching a brilliant and convincing syllogism.

Mrs. Baird laughed.

"In that case, Betty, I'll put a little brillian-tine on your brush and restore your normal moral sense, at least until you put away your hat and that freshly laundered shirt-waist. I suppose the other things are merely artistic disarray."

"'T was ever thus!" sighed Betty, dramatically, clasping her flying hair in her two hands and inserting more hairpins. "Comes of having Puritan ancestors. Can't be shiftless for a single moment."

However, the hat was thrust into its box and put away on the top shelf of the closet,



the coat was on its hanger in a trice, and Betty sat down by her mother and pointed out Edwyna's new accomplishment. One of the farmer's children had joined her, and they were having a keen competition with one skate apiece.

In spite of Betty's airy disavowal of moral responsibility, she had been thinking deeply, and perhaps perplexedly, about her encounter with Mr. Webbie.

For a time there was silence. Then Betty slipped her hand into her mother's and spoke hesitatingly.

"Mother?"

"What is it, dear?" She turned around expectantly. She knew that Betty had something on her mind when she began with that almost reluctant tone of questioning.

"I saw — I talked — with the — the Webbies to-day!"

"Yes?" Mrs. Baird leaned forward.

Then Betty told her mother about her afternoon's experience.

"I'm glad this has happened, sweetheart," said Mrs. Baird. "I could n't bear to think there was any one in the world you could n't



think kindly about. You feel better about them now, don't you?"

Betty played with her mother's ring, smiling and shaking her head slowly.

"I did n't have a word to say to Mr. Webbie, and I don't know that I feel a bit better about him and his old library. But I did pity her, and I just thought, Why should she suffer for what her husband did? She was n't to blame for it."

"It's the easiest thing in the world to vent our wrath on anybody connected with one who has injured us. I was n't sure that even Mr. Webbie's cat would be safe from you," said Mrs. Baird, playfully; then, more seriously:

"Betty, darling, you must do your best to stamp out resentment. If left to rankle, there is almost nothing else that will hurt a fine nature so quickly. And there's only one way to destroy it,—to love your neighbor as yourself. Otherwise there is no peace in the heart. It seems to the young—yes, and to the old, too—a deep and hard philosophy, but only love can make life broad and livable. That's the reason we have the second part of the Summary of the Law."



Betty shook her head rebelliously and started up.

"I don't see how you can compel love,—and for such people as the Webbies! Just think how unjust Mr. Webbie was to me, putting me out of that position!"

"You don't need to 'compel' it," said her mother, smiling at Betty's hearty and natural distaste for the idea of trying to love the Webbies! "It will compel you, if every time you remember an injustice you try to think of some kind thing about the one who has done it, and, when possible, do something for that person."

Betty gave an incredulous whistle.

"Oh, mother! Think something kind of Mr. Webbie?"

Betty was not the first to find that a hard saying.

Mrs. Baird smiled at her daughter's vehemence.

"Sweetheart, are you happy in your work with Miss Minturne?" she asked abruptly.

Betty turned to her mother rather wonderingly.

"Why, mother, what a question! You



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know I am perfectly happy. I think it's wonderful, the way it came about!"

Mrs. Baird's gentle eyes twinkled at the success of her little trap.

"Betty, dear," she asked, "didn't Mr. Webbie have something to do with bringing it all about?"

Betty looked at her mother suspiciously. Then a ripple broke over her face, and she laughed appreciatively.

"Mother, darling, score one for you! The joke's on me! Yes, I'll have to give Mr. Webbie some of the credit, though honestly I do it grudgingly."

"The effort will be mechanical at first, but not insincere." Mrs. Baird paused, as if trying to recall something, then, with an amused smile, she continued:

"Betty, don't you remember that little book of your grandmother Seabury's, 'The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man'? You used to read it when you could barely spell out the words."

"Why, of course I do!" Betty ran to the bookcase. "I can put my hand on it in the dark. It's on the top shelf, with her



Fénelon's 'Pious Thoughts,' and Young's 'Night Thoughts.'"

She took down the slender, faded green book, on whose narrow frayed back was the title in plain gold letters, and opened it gayly at the first page, and read:

"To Miss Elizabeth Seabury,  
from her Friend,  
Joseph Lyman. Jan. 1, 1830."

Betty laughed. "Is n't that quaint, — 'To Miss Elizabeth Seabury,' when grandmother was only six! And is n't the writing beautifully plain! And literary looking!"

Betty looked intently at the old-fashioned writing, then turned over the leaves quickly.

"But what made you speak of this?" she asked, as her mother took the book.

"Don't you see, Betty, that Mr. Webbie is 'the Poor Rich Man'? Now, can't you give him the same consideration that you do our farmer John here? Just because he's poor and has a delicate wife we overlook a great many of his shortcomings."

"But that seems different, somehow," said Betty, smiling, as though she did see but was



not willing to acknowledge it when it came to the pompous Mr. Webbie. "Poor people have such hard times."

"Harry 's been given a book as a prize by his schoolmaster, and this is what he finds on the blank page as he shows it to his two girl friends." Mrs. Baird then read, in her pleasant, cultivated voice: "'It gives me much pleasure to record here the diligence and success of my esteemed pupil, Harry Aikin, and still more to testify to his strict practice of the golden rule of this book, 'Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.''"

"Oh, I remember, mother! The girls were discussing it, and little Susy said this prize was for loving everybody — here it is — but I remember I loved Harry because he said he did n't love everybody 'by a seaful.' Now we 'd say 'jugful.' Then they proved he could n't follow the Golden Rule *without loving people.*"

"That 's what I wanted to find," and Mrs. Baird took the book again and turned over the pages. "He said his mother told him just to do a person a kindness, to set about to make him happier, and the love, or something that



would answer the purpose, would be pretty sure to come."

"I used to love that little book," said Betty. She hesitated, for she knew how her mother prized all keepsakes of her own mother's. "I love it now, for it 's so quaint." Betty patted the little volume. "But, mother, is n't it a trifle Sunday-schoolish?"

"You 'might do worse,' as Miss Jane says, than to read some of these 'Sunday-schoolish' books," Mrs. Baird laughed. "If you live up to the Golden Rule, you won't find it a goody-goody living, I assure you," she added, emphatically. "It takes pluck and plenty of it. You know Who inspired the words — the bravest life ever lived," finished Mrs. Baird, softly, as Betty sat down and leaned against her knee.

"To keep the Golden Rule would make a Golden Life, would n't it, mother mine?" said Betty, abruptly, playing absently with the book.

"Yes," said her mother. "One might begin with a Golden Year, then accumulate Gold for a lifetime."

"I 'd rather try for a Golden Day first —



no, a Golden Minute would be safer," Betty laughed. "I might possibly have a Golden Minute."

"Why not begin our Gold hoarding this Golden Minute?" said Mrs. Baird. She took the little book and wrote lightly on the fly-leaf:

"April thirtieth.

Betty Baird: her Golden Year."

She looked at it thoughtfully for a moment, then added this line from an early American poet:

"Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold!"

Betty leaned over to watch her writing.

"Oh, mother!" she cried, catching her breath as the last word was put down. "It's like — like taking a pledge!"

She rose to her feet and stooped over her mother, kissing her hair and whispering:

"I'll try, mother, dearest!"

Then shooting a mischievous glance backwards as she ran from the room, she called over her shoulder:

"But it would have been nice to stay at home with you, in the Silver-Lining Library!"



## VII

### “NODS AND BECKS, AND WREATHED SMILES”

**J**OHN was the farmer-on-shares of the century-old farm which the Bairds had bought, and which Betty had named “Boxwood,” because of the thick old box that wound plumply up to the front and side doors and encircled the few remaining flower-beds. He was a queer, taciturn, glum creature, his only recreation foretelling the weather. At almost any hour of the day one could see his lean neck twisted towards the sky, and his jaw and mouth — which occupied half his long face — tilted to a strange angle of observation. On this May-day Betty found him planted at the front gate, in his prophetic attitude.

“Now do please say that it will be a splendid bright day,” Betty besought him. She gazed anxiously towards the southwest, where a few clouds had piled up since she looked out of her window early in the morning.



"Don't know as I kin, truthful," John growled. He did not like to be disturbed at this ticklish business.

Betty's heart sank. She had great faith in his powers, as he had been a sailor in his youth and had spent much of his time scanning the sky. Yet hope did not die, for at best John was not a cheerful herald of the day. His prophecies were Jeremiads too often to be wholly trustworthy. Then, too, poor John had "dyspepsy."

"Look at them clouds raisin' from the lee agin the wind, like birds raisin' from the water. It cert'n'y looks to me 's if we 'd have fallin' weather 'bout high tide," he went on, with growing hope.

"And high tide at 3.17 to-day!" Betty was dismayed. "Now just think how disappointed your little girls will be if it rains," she cajoled him, trying to soften his prognostications by an appeal to the one well-known tender spot in his heart.

John squinted at the sky once more, then looked towards his house, where his two tow-headed children were racing around and flapping their blue gingham aprons at the chickens scratching in the garden.



"Them clouds might maybe lighten up a leetle mite towards noon," he granted. He was plunged in thought for a moment.

"Still, 'A wet May brings a barnful o' hay.' Ef it rains we otter rec'leck that," he said gleefully. He walked off with the air of a man at peace with his conscience and the whole world.

Betty was rooted to the spot.

"Well, of all detestable people!" she began. Then a humorous smile dimpled the corners of her mouth, and she ran in to breakfast to set the family off with John, the Joy Killer's latest bit of constitutional saturninity.

But John's prophecy did not bring its own fulfilment.

Sweetness and warmth through the air, exquisite mingling of yellow greens in the foliage of the arching elms against the background of dark firs, a blue sky with swarming clouds of fleece, deep shadows on the bay from the low wooded hills,—all gave to Betty's home this May-day an elusive charm found in a mezzotint after Gainsborough.

Jack and Dunny came early to hang ribbons of contrasting colors from the top of the May-



pole, which were to be woven by the children in their dance. Mr. King brought a splendid curtain of crimson and gold to throw over "Lois's Throne," while Jack's mother sent a load of decorative shrubs.

Of course Lois knew that the children were to welcome her, and entered gayly into the play. There was to be as little formality as possible, she said, in the part she was to take in the ceremony, for the dainty maids with their joyous songs and sweet-smelling garlands would make the queen's part subordinate. So she threw aside all self-consciousness and lost herself in the jolly spirit of the day.

John made hay while the sun shone — since his thunder-clouds had gone back on him — by cutting the new grass and clipping the old box into symmetrical trimness. Chairs and tables, tottering always a little downhill, stood under the trees, giving a sense of merrymaking that was inspired partly by their festive air of irresponsibility as safe places for body and limb, for dishes or food. The snowy damask, the great bowls of jonquils and dogwood, and the blue dishes, added their touch of romance to this picture filched



from the picturesque days of Merrie Old England.

Craig Ellsworth came early, bringing his mother and Dottie (aged five) in his boat. Betty and Craig had been good comrades ever since the Bairds had moved to Long Island, as Craig was her nearest neighbor. They had swapped talents, Betty helping the lad with his Latin, while he taught her scientific gardening.

Craig had his own way to make in the world and was quite unaccustomed to society until he fell in with Betty and her friends. Then he went to college, and at once a transformation began. He was passing through the dandy period, and Betty changed her name for him from "Clammerboy" to "Arbiter elegantium." He had gained to perfection what he called *savoir-faire*, somewhat laughingly, it's true, but with more seriousness than Jack or Dunny, to whom society was an old story, would attach to the phrase. Betty often wondered which way the scales would turn, and held her breath to-day when she saw him carrying a slim walking-stick.

Doctor and Mrs. Baird, with Mrs. Brooks



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and Mary King and others, received the guests informally under the cedars.

Lois was not dressed in conventional May Queen style, for she wanted to join in the games; so the only touch of regality was a gold filigree belt on her simple white China silk in which she tucked the violets Dunmore Lane had brought her.

Betty's creamy flannel suit was, to use Gertrude's word about it — and Gertrude was an authority on clothes — “chic,” and no one could doubt its becomingness. Lois had stuck a rose into her golden wavy hair; and the succession of expressions on her face, one moment blithe, then anxious, again dimpling with fun, showing concern for some guest's comfort, smiling whimsically at one of John's characteristic actions, or brimming over with the joke Jack had told her, all evinced a personality of sweetness, of humor, of sunnyness, of generous high spirits that made things go and made her loved.

Mrs. Ellsworth, when shaking hands with her, whispered, “You are Craig's guiding star!” and for the moment, since the air was so clear and sweet and the sun so bright and



the world so happy, Betty thrilled at the words. A guiding star!

But her sense of humor was too much for her, and as she looked at Craig's jaunty little cane she knew she did n't want to be his Star! Involuntarily her eyes sought Jack, — handsome, debonair Jack Brooks, rich, well-bred, a prince of good fellows. Then her hand was clutched, and she heard Edwyna's elegant announcement of the arrival of Bishop Warborne and his two grandsons, Paul and Reginald.

All swarmed around the Bishop, for though a high dignitary, there was so much simplicity and sweetness in his nature that children loved to catch his hand and had a sense of peculiar nearness to the tall, distinguished-looking clergyman.

Reginald seized Betty's hands in both of his, while Paul greeted her not less warmly but with more dignity, as became an older brother and a theological student. Betty spoke to Paul with some shyness. Though she admired him, she did not feel easy with him. She felt that her gay temperament was displeasing to him, and Betty had always wanted to please



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Paul, though why she could not have explained, even to herself, and certainly not to Lois.

Perhaps Charles Lamb — sad misnomer — made the sensation of the early arrivals. A classmate of Dunmore Lane's, he was a true satellite, tolerated for the really good heart which shone through his harmless eccentricities. "The Count," as they had dubbed him at Yale, appeared to-day in all the glory of yellow waistcoat, yellow buckskin gloves, yellow spats, shining top hat, and a huge horse-head walking-stick, with his bulldog at his heels.

Clever, handsome Edith Banks, with a touch of airiness befitting a May-day party in her white billowy hat, was there, "the very one for Reginald," Betty and Lois decided; while Gertrude Lynn, in her trailing gray Directoire gown, beamed on Lamb, whom Jack at once piloted up to her.

"The others," as King called the guests who were not in the intimate inner circle, came swiftly in carriages, automobiles, or boats, in true holiday spirits.



## VIII

### THE MAY-DAY GAMES

“I, I been a rambling all this night,  
And sometime of this day;  
And now returning back again,  
I brought you a garland gay.

“A garland gay I brought you here,  
And at your door I stand;  
'Tis nothing but a sprout, but 'tis well budded out,  
The works of our Lord's hand.”

THE ancient May-day carol rang out full and clear and sweet from the thicket of lilacs, as nine little maids, singing blithely and swinging their garlands gay, like dryads from their native oaks, came dancing across the greensward to Lois on her “throne.”

Dottie, herself a dimpled sunny flower, with a lightly woven basket of posies on her head, the tendrils rippling down among her curls, tripped ahead, lisping the song; then



hand in hand and two by two danced Edwyna and Christine, Phyllis and Priscilla, Henrietta and Mary, Virginia and Marybelle, all in white, with fluttering sashes of violet, blue, or pink.

Dancing and singing in unison, they flung their fragrant rosy wreathes to the breeze, and like a lovely rainbow they formed in front of Lois, singing the carol again, and chanting with saucy smiles the cheery refrain:

“Why don't you do as we have done,  
The very first of May?”

They bent one knee before their queen and showered the sweet-smelling arbutus upon her. Again they bent the knee and, moving backwards, courtesied low at every third step as they gayly repeated, with laughing eyes on their queen, the elfishly mocking refrain, as farther and farther they danced away to the May-pole:

“Why don't you do as we have done,  
The very first of May?”

“Why, yes, why don't we?” cried Betty, springing up. “Lois, you and Dunny first.”





LIKE A LOVELY RAINBOW THEY FORMED IN FRONT  
OF LOIS — *Page 80*







Off over the green danced the Queen and Dunny Lane; Jack grasped Betty's hand and they whirled merrily after them; Alexander King and Mary flew close behind; Craig and Edith clasped hands and went skipping away; Reginald followed briskly with Dorothy King; Paul snatched up one of John's little girls and danced away; Charlie Lamb and Gertrude came on behind; John and his wife, hand in hand, trudged grimly after; the Bishop followed in a dignified minuet step with Mrs. Baird, as the Doctor and Mrs. Brooks stepped lightly off. No one failed in this happy surrender to the tempting invitation of the lovely sprites, and the spring day was filled with voices chanting merrily:

“Why don't you do as we have done,  
The very first of May?”

Across the soft grass the feet of young and old danced a royal welcome to the May-day, and the children caught the swaying ribbons and wove them swiftly about the May-pole.

“May I put this piece of May in your buttonhole?” asked Christine of the Bishop.

“I shall be delighted, my dear.” The



Bishop leaned down benignly, so her timid fingers could place the blossom on his coat. "It seems all a piece of May," he added, straightening up and looking around. Then, noticing Doctor and Mrs. Baird and Mrs. Brooks coming up, he sportively challenged them to a game of croquet.

Others started bowling on the green, which Craig explained in his terse, precise way. The children skipped off to play a brisk game of battledore and shuttlecock. Then there was a call for the most exciting feature of the afternoon, the archery contest.

Jack, an enthusiastic and skilful archer, now appeared, weighed down with bows and arrows, which he dropped on a chair. His young brother Rodney tagged proudly after him, lugging the target. Jack had greatly interested Betty and Lois, and to some extent Edith and Gertrude, in the game, and had given them a good deal of instruction.

Now, after he had placed the target near the stone fence, he turned to them.

"Ladies first!" He bowed, waving his hand towards the weapons. "And let your arrows stick in the target."



“You are not going to make us shoot first,” protested the girls. “We won’t shoot first.”

They locked their hands behind them. The boys surrounded them and insisted, but they stood fast. Suddenly Betty sprang forward and seized a bow and arrow.

“I suppose you want us to shoot first, Jack Brooks, so you can notch our arrows for us,” she mocked gayly. “Very well, ‘jolly Knight,’ the games must go on, so I’ll give you the chance.”

“Aha, old man, they see through your little game all right!” laughed Dunny, digging his elbows into Jack’s ribs. In return, Jack gave a huge knowing wink as Betty got ready to shoot.

Poising her graceful young figure, with the left foot advanced, she raised her bow, drew her right hand steadily back to her ear, fastened her eye on the target, and let fly.

“Nine!” instantly called out Craig, who stood down at the target.

“Hooray! Bully for Betty!” cheered the boys, tossing their caps into the air, while the girls clapped triumphantly.

The bowlers, croquet players, and the



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children with their battledores and shuttlecocks, hearing the uproar, rushed in a body to the course, lined up on each side, and craned their necks eagerly to see the target. Seeing Betty's arrow sticking almost exactly in the centre of the bull's-eye, they burst into a round of applause.

"Oh, girls," screamed Edwyna, shrilly, waving her battledore wildly to the slow ones as she pranced around, her black eyes snapping, "oh, girls, Cousin Betty hit the bull right in the eye!"

Little Rodney Brooks sniffed scornfully at Edwyna's bragging, and glowered darkly at her.

"Huh! Accidents will happen!"

The other girls then displayed their skill, all shooting carefully and with varying degrees of success, but all doing pretty well.

At last, when the boys' turn came, the target looked like the twin brother to a porcupine.

"Be sure you notch the arrow in the bull's-eye," Dunny warned Jack, with a smile at Betty as Jack stepped up to shoot.

"Drive it clear through the target, Jack!" called out King.



“Don’t let those girls beat you,” pleaded Rodney, turning his back on Edwyna.

With a great show of care Jack picked out a bow, tested it, twanged the string, and examined it carefully for fraying; picked up one arrow after another and sighted along each until perfectly satisfied that he had a straight one; held up a blade of grass to test the force and direction of the wind; planted himself firmly on his feet, raised his bow, aimed long and carefully, shot, and missed! His arrow plumped into the old stone wall and flew into a dozen pieces.

The spectators gazed in surprise for a second, then set up a shout of laughter, and the little girls, facing the downcast Rodney, exulted at the top of their voices. “He missed! He missed! Betty beat him! Ha, ha! Ha, ha!”

Dunny, King, Craig, Reginald, and Paul surrounded Jack, and hilariously wished him better luck next time. He tried hard to look chagrined, when he finally freed himself from the boys and walked over to where the girls were standing in a group, watching the proceedings with suspicious eyes.



"I certainly did my best. There must have been something wrong with the feathering of that arrow," he explained speciously.

"Jack, you're a perfect humbug! You did your level 'best' to miss it," said Betty. "Now, Dunny, it's your turn. Do play fair, won't you?"

"Of course, Betty, of course!" Dunny assured her earnestly.

Jack suppressed a snicker, and the other boys, with averted faces, hurried out of earshot.

Dunny's preparations for his shot were, if possible, more painstaking than Jack's, but his arrow landed on the very edge of the target and hung dangling there. He looked at it with a pained expression.

"Great Scott, Jack!" he ejaculated. "You and I'd better give up archery and go back to marbles and mumbly-peg! We can't shoot for sour apples!"

"You're certainly a rank shot, old fellow; one of the worst ever!" Jack agreed cheerfully, slapping him on the shoulder.

"Beat you, anyhow," retorted Dunny.

In the end Betty was tumultuously proclaimed victor, with Lois a close second, and



they were showered with congratulations by the boys, who professed breathless admiration at their marvellous skill.

All the younger folks stayed for the dance in the barn in the evening. It was a fine, substantial building, made of heavy timbers, with the conscientious workmanship of a hundred years ago. It had been cleaned until it shone, and the boys took great delight in hanging from the massive beams ships' lanterns and quaint old household ones long out of use, and ranging picturesquely on a high shelf pots of flowers and shrubs, and festooning the walls with flags and bunting.

The great wide doors were flung open, and the crescent moon came out over the little hills and shone full into the deep barn, as the merrymakers strolled in two by two. The floor was excellent for dancing, and bundles of sweet yellow hay around the walls formed seats for the onlookers and for those weary of tripping "the light fantastic toe."

The village fiddler sat on a barrel in a corner, under the light of a great brass ship's lantern, and struck up wild rollicking airs, "Money Musk" and "The Sailor's Hornpipe" being



the favorites. Soon there was a call for a waltz tune, and waltzes, polkas, and square dances followed in rapid succession until all were thoroughly tired.

The fiddler leaned back against the wall, his ancient fiddle across his knee, and the dancers dropped on the bundles of hay to rest, while Betty and Lois dipped out old Katie's delicious fruit lemonade. All at once they were startled by a weird sound. Looking up, they saw dancing down the middle of the barn floor a mad-looking creature, making mad music.

"What —" Betty started to ask, when the queer, fantastic object drew near. "Why, it's a Highlander in his kilts. And, oh, Lois, he's playing a bagpipe!"

A second figure, similarly dressed, flung itself after the first, and the two wild Scots danced a Highland fling in the centre of the floor, their claymores and dirks gleaming fearfully, and then, with frantic gestures and a last wild note from the pipes, the two disappeared as mysteriously as they had come, and went to their quiet gardeners' lodges on the Brooks' estate!



## IX

### JUST AS LOIS HAD SAID

BETTY was at her desk, figuring busily on a set of specifications, some particularly knotty problems bringing passing frowns to her forehead, when Miss Minturne, tall, graceful, distinguished, with decision written on every handsome feature, swept through the room and stopped in front of the desk. She began to play with a book, picking it up, laying it down, only to go through the process again.

“Won’t you have my swivel chair, Miss Minturne?” Betty sprang up and pushed it forward, for it was one of their jokes that nothing in the world but a revolving chair could give them a sense of business prosperity. Each offered her own to the other as a mark of very special favor.

“No, thank you, Betty,” replied Miss Minturne, absently, too much in earnest to notice



the little byplay. "I 'm going to run away to-morrow. Do you think your mother would let you run with me?"

Betty caught her breath. It was just as Lois had said!

"I can ask her to-night, and telephone to you. I 'd love to run away with you, and I 'm sure my mother would let me."

"Why not ask your father at luncheon?"

Betty laughed in her happy, infectious manner.

"I could. But father would be certain to say, 'Ask your mother, Elizabeth.' And when I ask mother, she will say, 'Ask your father, Elizabeth.' And there I shall be 'Elizabethed' from one to the other like a weaver's shuttle, until at last they go to the study to talk it over and presently I shall hear the outcome."

Miss Minturne smiled lovingly into Betty's bright, laughing face.

"I did n't know you were such a weighty subject. Well, telephone to me. You should go home right after luncheon and get your things together."

Naturally, Betty was dying to ask where they were going, but with the courtesy that



was instinctive she waited for Miss Minturne to volunteer the information.

“Shall I take a trunk?”

“Oh, no; only a small bag. That blue serge you have on will be just the thing for travelling, and a little dinner gown and your pretty white flannel will be enough.”

“If my mother should want to write to me, where — what address shall I give her?”

“That’s so! You dear old home-body, of course your mother’ll want to know.” Miss Minturne thought a moment. “Really, Betty, I have n’t decided. I need a change, and I’m going to run around until I find it. I’ll explain to your father to-morrow morning.”

“I suppose, then, ‘On the Wing’ will be the best address,” Betty laughed.

Promptly at eight o’clock the next morning Doctor Baird and Betty, carrying her bag and umbrella, met Miss Minturne at the Thirty-fourth Street ferry. The Doctor and Miss Minturne shook hands cordially.

“It’s very good of you, Doctor Baird, to let me have Betty. I promise to take the best of care of her.”

“During the past year we have had abun-



dant proof of your ability to do that, Miss Minturne." The Doctor bowed.

"You are very kind, Doctor. But really, Betty has been taking care of me instead of I of her. You don't know what a comfort and help that dear girl has been to me," turning her eyes to Betty, who had wandered off to the news-stand and was vainly trying to decide on a magazine from among the fascinating and bewildering array.

"Elizabeth has been very happy with you," said the Doctor, rather helpless in conventional conversation. His life had been unusually free from the amenities of society, pure and simple. In Weston his conversation during his pastoral calls had always had the sustaining basis of church matters, in which every one was interested, momentarily, at least. "But allow me to purchase your ticket," he added. As the happy thought occurred to him, he drew his long wallet from the inside pocket of his waistcoat.

"Thank you very much, but I have a mileage book. And besides, I — well, really, Doctor Baird, I have n't determined where we are going. I have such perfect confidence



in Betty that I've been thinking of letting her decide." Miss Minturne showed, what was rather unusual with her, some embarrassment. "Would you object if we should get on the first train that's ready, and get out when we feel like it? Betty can settle it when the conductor comes around. We'll stay on Long Island, so we won't be far away. We'll telephone or telegraph as soon as we arrive at —"

"Utopia?" supplied the Doctor.

"Never fear, father," said Betty, who had just come up, "Miss Minturne always lands somewhere, and if she leaves it to me, I'll land her."

Miss Minturne listened smiling, for they always appreciated each other's little jokes. Then she turned to the Doctor.

"To tell the truth, I want to get away from thinking, so it positively hurts to try to decide where to go. I thought about it nearly all night, and I hated every spot the moment it came to my mind."

"Ah!" said the Doctor, earnestly. "I fear, Miss Minturne, you are sadly in need of rest. That state denotes a high nervous tension. I remember how sleepless I grew



in trying to decide about coming to New York."

He was interrupted by the announcement that the train was ready. Kissing Betty and shaking hands with Miss Minturne, he watched them go off, Betty's face full of interest and mischief over the mysterious journey.

"What a relief to be going, going from that big, noisy city!" exclaimed Miss Minturne, as she sank into the seat, drawing a long sigh. Leaning back, she closed her eyes and was silent.

Betty's eyes were very tender as she tried to make Miss Minturne more comfortable. She slid her bag under her feet and pulled down the shade to protect her from the sun.

Hearing the car door slam, she looked up and saw the conductor working his way slowly towards them. She glanced at Miss Minturne, who still lay back, not an eyelid moving. The conductor drew near. Betty looked at him, then back at Miss Minturne and at the mileage book in her hand. The conductor was now taking a ticket from the bronzed farmer across the aisle. Here he is! Still Miss Minturne gave no sign. Hastily



but gently, Betty took the book from her hand. A smile came to Miss Minturne's lips, but she did not open her eyes.

Betty thought rapidly. Then she named a station she knew, not many miles from her home, where she had driven with Mrs. Brooks and Jack and where they had found a delightful inn, situated picturesquely by the Sound.

The conductor tore the necessary mileage slips from the books and passed on. Miss Minturne opened her eyes. "Thank you, child!" she said, reaching over and patting Betty's hand.

Betty took her hand and held it in her firm, loving grasp. Yet she smiled to herself. "Lois was certainly right! I did n't know it took people this way. The poets don't speak of a case like this! Still, it must be hard for her to think of giving up all that beautiful work she is so much interested in, for of course Mr. Anstice won't let her go on with her Studio of Design."

To eighteen-year-old Betty, staid gray-haired Mr. Anstice naturally did n't weigh very heavily against the fascinating art.

Not a word was spoken until they came to



the end of their journey. The station was spick and span, surrounded by plots of fresh grass and beds of early spring flowers.

Leaving the car, they stepped into a decrepit hack, drawn by a pair of lean gray horses. The driver, an old white-whiskered man, whose mahogany complexion and gnarled hands showed that a life of toil had preceded this leisurely occupation, drove them slowly to the inn.

After dinner, as they sat by the water, Miss Minturne said suddenly: "We shall leave here to-morrow. It's too soothing. I need a counter-irritant. I am going to see my grandaunt in Westchester. She lives on our old homestead, Minturne Manor. You'll like it, Betty, for it's more than a hundred and fifty years old."

"Don't you need rest, Miss Minturne, rather than a counter-irritant? You've worked hard all winter, and now you feel it."

"You are right, dear, I am fagged out. By the way, Betty, have you ever noticed that our friends — you are doing it now — excuse our unevenness and irritability by saying that we are tired?"



“Well, I like uneven people,” protested Betty, loyally.

“You are young enough to bear it, little sister, but as we grow older we won’t put up with it. We don’t like people who take things hard. It’s taking too much of a liberty with our peace and comfort. Your quotation from Newman is right. ‘A cheerful heart, an even temper, sweetness, gentleness, and brightness of mind’ are worth everything.”



## X

### MINTURNE MANOR

ON they pursued their journey, Miss Minturne having telephoned to Mrs. Baird and received permission to take Betty to her grandaunt's.

"What a life I am leading you!" she exclaimed, as she dropped into a seat in the car at the Grand Central Station.

"A dance, Miss Minturne!" replied Betty, with a saucy smile, adding, "and you know how I love to dance!"

This time the railway station, which Betty could see from a distance, as they rounded a long curve, was a squat, attractive building of gray stucco, with a pleasant red roof welcoming the coming guest. A carriage took them by a circuitous route, and at the top of a steep hill looking out over a beautiful ravine the driver halted.

"D' ye see that hill over there?" he asked, pointing his whip with pride to the dim



horizon. "If it wa' n't for that hill we could see the Sound from this very spot."

"Yes?" said Miss Minturne, settling back and closing her eyes with determination.

Betty giggled a little to herself, but leaned forward, for she had not lost those pleasant anticipations of the beauties of nature gratuitously pointed out, and while her faith was unequal to removing the mountain between her and the Sound, yet the green hazy valley below, shot through with dazzling yellow roads and a gray winding stream, repaid her.

Jogging along a broad road, overarched by oaks, locusts, and elms, and past the old stone mill, they alighted at a commanding house, built in the Dutch style, which stood in the centre of wide-spreading acres sparsely covered with grass and stubble. Magnificent trees, showing neglect, however, dotted the lawn, while the spring air and the warm early sunshine brought out wistful odors of things planted long ago, which survived by the courtesy of nature alone, — box, lilacs, bayberry, and calycanthus.

In response to the thunder of the immense brass eagle knocker, the heavy mahogany



door was swung back by a sour-faced old serving-man, and at once a high-pitched voice called out from somewhere inside:

"Come in, come in, Isabelle! I saw you get out of that ramshackle old hack! What *are* the Minturnes coming to!"

A Boston terrier rushed at them, barking fiercely, then fawned on them in the friendliest fashion, and a tiny King Charles spaniel bow-wowed in a way that made Betty say it sounded "like a woolly store dog" and take him up in her arms, where he snuggled down contentedly.

"That 's my grandaunt," Miss Minturne said in a low voice, as they walked towards the room indicated by the servant.

They were ushered into a drawing-room which, for size, Betty had not seen equalled even at 'The Pines' or at Miss Minturne's home on Washington Square.

Long, wide, and high-ceiled, it was carpeted with old Aubusson; the walls were a plain pale gray, against which were gracefully outlined beautiful Belter rosewood chairs; while two sofas, covered with the same delightfully faded rose-colored damask, reposed at each



end of the room; rosewood tables and inlaid cabinets, the furniture for which the rich, before the sixties, forfeited their colonial and Revolutionary pieces, stood like pigmies on the rose-strewn carpet of this vast room.

As they entered, Betty caught a glimpse of herself in a distant pier-glass, and this handsome, yet cheerless room, gave her an odd feeling of separation from her own personality.

At one end of the room Betty saw Miss Minturne's granduncle and grandaunt. The old gentleman was tall, thin, and aristocratic, with a mild and pleasant face, his snowy Dundreary whiskers setting off a complexion that was as pink and delicate as a girl's. At one side lay his Boston terrier, and the spaniel leaped at once from Betty's arms and ensconced himself at the other side. Betty sat down beside him when she had gone through the empty formality of an introduction to the old lady, for it was very soon evident that wherever she stood or sat remained space to Madame Minturne.

Fascinated, however, Betty could not take her eyes from her, sitting there in the corner of the sofa, her back straight as a ramrod, a



great Paisley shawl thrown over her knees and a chudder over her shoulders. Peering out from the midst of the handsome draperies was a tiny, withered brown face, with piercing eyes, surrounded by a large lace cap ornamented with cherry-colored ribbons.

"Well, you 're here at last, Isabelle. I should like to know what brought you," the old lady demanded imperiously, in a shrill treble, shaking a hitherto concealed ebony cane at her grandniece. "I have been asking you to come for six months or more."

"Grandaunt, you forget that I'm a very busy woman," Miss Minturne reminded her.

"You need n't scream, Isabelle. I'm not deaf," said the old lady. Then, with no effort to lower her own voice, she asked:

"Who was that you brought with you?"

Miss Minturne said something about Betty helping her in her work.

"A working girl!" She examined Betty curiously for a moment.

The flamboyant ribbons bobbed closer to Miss Minturne, and Betty felt herself dwindle once more into an object without dimension, color, or form. Mr. Minturne, however, made



amends by smiling benignly and nodding his white head towards the dogs and telling Betty about their tricks. But evidently he annoyed his wife, for she bade him be quiet, whispering to Miss Minturne that he was a little childish.

As Betty was now shut out of the conversation, she had an excellent opportunity to look around her. That gave her exquisite pleasure, for Miss Minturne had told her that the house was more than a hundred and fifty years old, and had been a centre of Revolutionary history.

In spite of its run-down condition and gloomy atmosphere, it had the charm of refined traditions, a background of past lives and histories that captivated Betty's antiquarian and historical spirit. It was spoken of as "The Great House," she had discovered at the station. It stood in the centre of an estate of two hundred acres or more, with a far-reaching vista over the hilltops, and commanded the valley like a fort. The high foundation wall and the massive square chimneys accented its military aspect.

Betty's eyes travelled from the windows back to the room. The portraits on the walls



were as awe-inspiring as the old lady; except one, which hung directly opposite the old man's chair. It was the modern portrait of a young man, and after a close look Betty was sure she could understand why Mr. Minturne sat in front of that frank, handsome face.

Even in the old gentleman's wrinkled forehead could still be traced the lines that made the young man's head so distinguished; the square jaw and the lips, sunken yet firm, were reproduced spiritedly in the portrait. In the young face there was missing the mildness of the venerable man, and in the old one the vitality and spirit of the youth. Both were serious, though Betty fancied she saw repeated in the portrait — and its eyes seemed to look straight into hers — the pleasant whimsical smile that the old man turned on her whenever his wife made one of her characteristically sharp speeches.

"I see you are wondering who that handsome young fellow is," said Mr. Minturne, softly, gently stroking his Dundrearys.

"It's a face to make one wonder that," said Betty. "He looks so — so — ready." She felt that this could not mean much to her



listener, but that had been the conclusion of her thoughts. There he stood, the man equal to any occasion, social or financial, military or diplomatic.

“He ’s our only grandson. He ’s in the diplomatic service. He ’s only twenty-five. That ’s young to have so much responsibility.”

He gave a side glance at his wife, but seeing that there was no probability of their being interrupted, he went on:

“He ’s coming home this summer. I wish he could be here while you are with us. He ’s been in Scotland lately, has a place there, sort of a shooting-box. But he ’s a true American,” he hastened to add. “He ’s not one of those who find other countries more to his liking than his own.” He stopped and looked proudly into the open, pleasant face. “I wonder now,” he continued slowly, “why so many of our young lads nowadays have such square jaws.”

“And square shoulders too,” Betty smiled. “But the jaws could n’t be tailor-made.”

“Nor dentist-made,” supplemented the old gentleman, with a quiet chuckle in which Betty joined discreetly, with a quick glance



at Madame Minturne, who, fortunately, was talking in a high key.

"I served all through the war," he mused, "and I don't think many of us had such a fighting expression as he has." He nodded towards the portrait.

Betty looked critically at the picture.

"But his eyes are so kind and laughing that at first one does n't notice the awful determination of his mouth."

"You've hit the nail on the head, my dear. 'Awful determination' expresses it exactly. He holds on like a bulldog."

"That's the only way to get through, these days," said Betty, with a wise shake of her sunny head, her face full of sad wisdom, and feeling herself the contemporary of the man of threescore and ten, as there filed through her mind one venture and its failure, then another and another.

Madame Minturne did not give Betty even a nod when she left the drawing-room for the night. Miss Minturne and her granduncle remained for an hour or so to play cribbage, for old Mr. Minturne had passed light-heartedly from "a youth of frolic to an old



age of cards." Betty found a book and passed the remainder of the evening pleasantly enough.

On going to her room, she threw herself into a chair, and with elbows on her knees, her chin sunk deep in her palms, began to think of her predicament, an ignored guest.

"I knocked, but you did n't answer, so I came right in. Had to be careful, for my grandaunt can hear a pin drop," whispered Miss Minturne, closing the door softly. In the moonlight she could see Betty's downcast attitude. "It 's my grandaunt, Betty, is n't it?"

Betty sprang up and juggled the unobservant Miss Minturne into the easiest chair in the room.

"Ye-e-s," she acknowledged reluctantly. She drew a stool to Miss Minturne's side. "Your aunt does n't want me here because I am a 'working girl,' and she has ignored me completely."

"You must n't mind her, dear." Miss Minturne spoke with the indifference of one whose mind was on her own troubles. "I confess that I'm more than half afraid of her myself, but she 's an interesting character, after all. On account of my Uncle Robert I



come to see her as often as I can. He loves cards, and I devote my evenings to playing with him. He's only a month older than grandaunt Ellen, but she insists that he's much older, and that he's growing childish. Pride has been her ruling passion, — pride of ancestry, of wealth, of position, of beauty, — and she has never forgiven me for going into 'trade,' as she puts it. You're 'in trade' too, my dear, so you're snubbed!"

Betty drew herself up. Why should she stay there only to be snubbed? This question was on the end of her tongue, when Miss Minturne laughed guardedly.

"Aunt Ellen will simply ignore you. She did me for a whole year after I went 'into trade,'" she added easily. "If Cousin Laurence were only here! He's splendid! That's the word! He's my ideal of a man. He has a lot of fun in him, too."

During a pause in the conversation there came from the next room a low monotone, as of some one reading.

"Grandaunt evidently is not asleep yet. She has a companion to read to her from the Bible. It's always the Bible, and she makes



her continue the reading even when she drops off into a doze."

The monotonous drone stopped. Then they heard Madame Minturne's shrill voice berating her companion. "There, I caught you. You stopped reading when you thought I was asleep. How often must I tell you, Manning, that I want you to keep right on, whether I am asleep or not!"

Miss Minturne and Betty involuntarily smiled into each other's eyes, Miss Minturne perhaps a trifle cynically, while Betty's face clouded with pity and concern for the unfortunate companion.

"It won't last much longer. She reads only until eleven. One thing, Betty," laughed Miss Minturne, consolingly, "you have seen a *grande dame*, high-tempered and imperious, penurious and inconsiderate, yet, after all, with the fascination of conscious power — the way one feels about Napoleon — and an old age no one could envy!"

"She's certainly an interesting character," admitted Betty, dubiously. The picture Miss Minturne presented failed to correspond with her ideas of the great ladies of the past.



"Now enjoy my grandaunt," said Miss Minturne, genially, rising and kissing Betty good-night.

"Miss Minturne certainly overrates my capacity for enjoyment!" said Betty to herself as the door closed.



## XI

### BETTY MEETS YOUNG MR. MINTURNE

WHILE Betty was dressing the next morning, she thought over the events of the day and evening before, and she wished from the bottom of her heart that she could pay for her dinner and be free from obligation to her unwilling hostess.

“Why, that old lady is as bad as Miriam and Caroline were at ‘The Pines’!” she exclaimed, brushing her hair so vigorously that the ivory brush was glittering with many golden spirals.

Betty felt indeed as if she had returned to those days in the boarding-school where, unknown and poorly dressed, she had excited the same feeling of snobbishness in the minds of some of the rich girls.

“Now it’s a woman of eighty! Think of it, eighty! And because I’m a ‘working girl’!”



Betty shook her head wonderingly, puzzled beyond the depth of her girlish understanding of human nature. Eighty, and not to see any more clearly than girls of sixteen!

While Mr. Minturne had been courteous and friendly, she felt that she would not be a guest until Mrs. Minturne had shown her ordinary civility.

Betty could not deceive herself into believing that old age was the cause of Madame Minturne's ignoring her. She had shown plainly and unmistakably that she would disregard every business friend of that eccentric niece of hers, "who knew everybody," Betty had heard her say the evening before.

"Such a proud old lady!" said Betty, half aloud, her eyes still seeing the quaint old figure sitting stiffly erect on the great sofa, enveloped in its shawls, and the lace cap, decorated with cherry-colored ribbons, all awry. "So old!"

She looked across the valley to where the sun was breaking through delicate pearly clouds above the hilltops, tipping them with red, and the whole countryside was wakening and stirring and flickering in the perfect June



morning. But Betty's eyes were still on the old Madame.

"I should think such old people would have more serious things to think about!" She felt that old age itself should be the cure for all levity and faults.

She turned from the window, and with a last look into the mirror to see that her hair was neat and her belt in place, she walked downstairs.

Betty's healthy young thoughts now began to turn to breakfast, yet she felt she could not eat another meal under this inhospitable roof. She was in a quandary. Miss Minturne had told her that her uncle and aunt always had their morning coffee and rolls in their own rooms, and as she was very tired she would follow their example, and that Betty should not wait for her. No one would miss her, thought Betty, and she decided at once that she'd walk down to the cross-roads and find her breakfast at the tiny shop she had noticed there as they drove up to the manor-house.

"What would my mother think if she knew that my hostess had not said good-night to me! If I were only like mother!" sighed



Betty. "She says a lady can never be insulted. But I can't fold my hands. I must fly off and do something when things are horrid."

Usually it could be said of Betty, as the impulsive colonial governor Burnet said of himself: "I act first and think afterwards." She walked briskly down the broad yellow road, lined with venerable trees, youthful looking in their budding foliage.

"If she were n't so old! Well, I'll just have to grin and bear it, as Jack says, only I think if it keeps up very long, I'll be like the Cheshire cats,—nothing but my grin will be left."

At the store she bought fresh rolls and a glass of milk and had a really "picknicky" breakfast. The shop was kept by a pleasant old country woman, who looked at Betty with unconcealed admiration and curiosity.

"Have you a room here which you could rent me for the night?" asked Betty, abruptly.

"Bless your heart, ain't you the young lady I seen goin' up to the great house yest'day?"

"Yes, but there is n't room enough for me," said Betty, impulsively, adding to herself, hotly: "No, not enough room to breathe in!"

Betty's indignation kindled anew at every



thought of remaining under Madame Minturne's roof.

"I did n't know as how they had so much company up there," muttered the old woman, evidently puzzled at so many guests having passed her shop without being seen. "Must 've come at night. But I did n't hear 'em."

This reason was painfully unsatisfactory to the old gossip, but had to content her until her daughter, a maid at the manor, should come down at nightfall and tell all the news of the house. Betty was quite unconscious of her perplexity.

"This has been a delicious breakfast," she said, smiling down at the old shopwoman, bent with age and work, who was like a child by the tall girl's side. "Please let me come to-night."

"O' course, o' course," she replied. A bell above the door tinkled and a customer came in.

As Betty went out, she almost stumbled over a little girl who was playing with a rag doll on the doorstep. She chatted with her for a few moments, then walked light-heartedly back towards the manor-house, her spirit keyed up



to its old blithesomeness by the bracing air, the songs of the early birds, the dainty breakfast, and by the relief that came with the knowledge that now she would no longer be obliged to tax an inhospitable hospitality.

As she walked back, however, at times slowly, then more hurriedly to keep pace with her thoughts, there came suddenly the deciding light that so often comes quite unexpectedly after a long pursuit and with no apparent association with previous ideas.

Why, she could not do this thing! It would surely hurt Miss Minturne, who was kindness and goodness and loveliness itself. Oh, she would not hurt her for all the proud old ladies in the world. No, nor for all the proud young hearts in the world, either! It came to her forcefully that pride and resentment should give way before love.

"Why, what has become of my Golden Rule?" asked Betty, smiling to herself, as a man might ask for his compass when lost in the woods. "I determined never, never to remember Mr. Webbie, and now — here's my first chance for a new start, and off I go! If I could only remember in time!"



She hurried back to the old storekeeper and recalled her engagement of the room. She had paid for it in advance, but as the woman seemed very poor, Betty refused to take back the money. Her second thoughts were apt to be rather expensive!

Again she started for Minturne Manor, pausing at one place to pick up a forlorn little mongrel pup that looked as if it had never before been held tenderly in human arms.

"I fear, puppy, that you and I will never be Noble Characters," she said, smiling down brightly at the dog, who put out a paw and touched her arm, as delicately sympathetic as if he were a King Charles spaniel. "I've wanted to be a Noble Character. I've wanted to overcome resentment. But it's awfully hard, puppy, is n't it?"

The dog looked up into her laughing eyes with all the solemnity of pupdom, which knows a thing or two, especially that life is no laughing matter, no matter what light-minded sunny-haired girls may think to the contrary.

"I'll confide this to you, puppy, I *am* a Noble Character, at least for the remainder of the day, and I can now meet the lady of the



manor — though she won't know it — with proper dignity. It would be a pity if a truly Noble Character, even if only a temporary one, could n't stand a little snubbing for a friend!"

When she reached the entrance gate, no one was to be seen, and she stopped to survey the house.

"Anyway," she thought, with youthful inconsequence and pride, the Noble Character momentarily in eclipse, "ours is almost as handsome as this. And maybe this one has a mortgage on it, too!"

The mere thought made her feel a sudden warmth. It would be impossible to be resentful towards people with a mortgage! But the remembrance of what Miss Minturne had said about their wealth nipped that in the bud.

"I'll try not to be 'beholden' to them or to intrude on Madame," she said, as she walked up the steps. She stopped a moment to admire the exquisite old fan-lights. "And I'll try to enjoy it all!"

Just then the dog slipped from her arms to bark wildly at the gardener, who was coming around the corner of the house. Betty made her way into the drawing-room, hoping that



Miss Minturne had come down, but found it deserted save by the sunbeams that played on the beautiful old carpet. She could not resist making a courtesy to the portraits, as she walked around, examining the quaint gowns of the ladies and the plum-colored coats and yellow or scarlet waistcoats of the men.

Finally she came to the one opposite to which she had sat the evening before,—the portrait of the grandson. Madame Minturne's discourtesy had so discolored things that Betty could not now see the portrait in the pleasing light she had when she talked about it with the loving grandfather. Now, as she looked at it, there came back to her a sentiment she had heard Madame Minturne express with great emphasis in her conversation with Miss Minturne: "I'd be perfectly willing to be a Lady Jane Grey to be queen for a day."

"Would you be willing to be beheaded to be king for just one day?" Betty demanded of the portrait, in an undertone.

The frank blue eyes smiled reassuringly back into her dark ones. Even then Betty forgot the grandfather's words: "My grandson is a true American."



"I am not at all sure of you, young man," she continued, smiling. "Oh, you're good looking, I'll grant that."

Betty turned to look out of the window. The blue eyes followed her. She looked back. "But you have your grandmother's high nose!" She found a sort of defiant pleasure in speaking aloud, for the room was still dominated by the spirit of Madame Minturne.

Her hands were loosely clasped behind her back, and the sunbeams found congenial places to play hide-and-seek in her golden brown hair, making the halo that little Dottie had once called a "hoop, like the lady's in the picture," as she pointed to the Madonna. And "Betty's hoop" had become a playful household word in the Baird home. Indeed, this same hoop had caused a poetic youth, one of Jack's Harvard chums, to liken her to Aurora.

The morning being rather cool, Betty had put on her simple white flannel dress, and in her belt she had stuck a bunch of crimson roses. If the poetic Junior had been there he, no doubt, would have said some sophomoric thing about "rosy Aurora," for her face was



bright and beautiful and glowing with perfect health. She stood before the portrait for some time, waiting for Miss Minturne. Then she gave it a last look, saying in a low voice, but with a distinctness that her pent-up feelings gave:

“Snob!”

This was her final decision regarding the perplexing face, and she turned away, determined not to be pleased with a Minturne; turned away so abruptly that she precipitated herself almost into the arms of —

“Why!” gasped Betty, springing back in confusion, looking from the man into whose arms she had nearly fallen to the portrait.

“No, I did n’t step down from my frame,” he said courteously, yet smiling like a man who enjoyed a joke. “Though, really, now, don’t you think that cruel word might produce just such a result?”

“Oh!” exclaimed Betty, the blood crimsoning her face. “Pardon me, I did n’t know —” She could not finish the sentence, and stood quiet, hoping for some way out of the predicament. Then, with a flash, despite her feeling of awkwardness, she said:



"I don't feel that even that word would justify your — haunting any one."

"No?" queried the stranger, as if considering an abstruse problem. Young Mr. Minturne did not continue, for Betty had walked towards the window, contriving, while listening courteously, to put the damper of finality on the conversation simply by a few steps.

There was silence. Betty gazed out of the window and tried to think, and the youthful diplomat discovered that his tact was not, in this emergency, up to its mark.

"So this is the Scion!" thought Betty.

As all her friends knew, Betty loved a coincidence, and reserved certain pages in her commonplace book for those from her own life or from the lives of others that she knew were authentic. And here was a coincidence that seemed to her to outrank any in the marble-covered book. Betty stared unseeingly into the garden. Mr. Minturne remained standing where she had left him, gazing fatuously at his own portrait.

"Why!" It was Miss Minturne's blessed voice. "Why!" she repeated, with inspiration and expiration of surprise, as she hastened



down the length of the room, "it's Laurence Minturne himself!"

Minturne swung around at the sound of her voice.

"Isabelle!"

He hurried forward and grasped her hands in his.

"The Scion loves Miss Minturne. I can tell that by his voice," said Betty to herself, and the Scion went up some pegs in her estimation.

"Why, what is Betty Baird doing standing with her back to the room!" exclaimed Miss Minturne. "Is n't this delightful! Laurence has stolen a march on us. Here he is. And here am I. Such a pleasant coincidence!" Miss Minturne hurried on.

She stepped to the sofa and pulled Betty down beside her. Characteristically, Miss Minturne was so wholly charmed with this meeting with a cousin she admired, that she did not at once notice any constraint in Betty or Mr. Minturne.

When they were seated, Minturne sat opposite his portrait; though it seemed to exert an unpleasant influence over him, it attracted him against his will, to study it, to see just



why this stranger should label it as she had.

Miss Minturne talked animatedly with her cousin, who got up abruptly and turned his back on the portrait, leaning against the mantelpiece and looking down at them. This gave Betty time to think out a plan for luncheon. She decided to go out for a walk and get lost. No, that would not do, for Miss Minturne would be worried. Oh, she had an engagement (to lunch with the old woman down the road)! As she heard Madame Minturne coming downstairs, Betty explained rather incoherently to Miss Minturne that she would not be back for luncheon, and slipped from the house.



## XII

### A GAY LUNCHEON IN THE LITTLE SHOP

BETTY chatted gayly with the old woman in the little shop, while she sat in a Windsor chair at a table by a window overlooking the deep valley which the winding river had cut for itself. The shop was perched on the very edge of the precipitous hill, suspended dizzily, like a bird-cage in a mass of green.

The day was cool yet balmy, and all sorts of green things were shooting up. It was all young and all blithe, and the blue sky bent over the earth in a beneficent arch. The trees stood silent, yet it seemed to Betty that their silence was voluntary, a restful reserve that the babbling run might well imitate.

The shopkeeper's grandchild, forefinger in mouth, came hesitatingly into the room. Betty caught her, and with merry ado tied a bright ribbon on her hair and a tiny one around the



thick grimy neck of Gwendolin, the rag doll she held in her arms. This last favor quite won the child, through her maternal pride, and she began to talk freely. By the time luncheon was ready, Betty and her small friend were exchanging confidences on dolls, and Betty insisted on her eating luncheon with her, that their conversation might continue without interruption.

While they were enjoying the hot biscuits, which had been brought in nestling in snowy napkins, the savory smells of baking floated in from the back room. The pup, which had rushed from his home as Betty passed and followed her, barking and capering, to the shop, now had his share in the luncheon. Through the open window came the voices of a multitude of birds, singing cheerily as they built their new homes in the surrounding trees. Above them all she could hear the glorious notes of two wood thrushes from a small pine tree across the road.

Betty's cheeks glowed in the fresh air that swept into the window from across the hills and deep ravines. "Is n't it beautiful!" she exclaimed, turning to the storekeeper.



"Ain't it!" she agreed. "An' them wood robins do sing so sweet!"

She fingered Betty's flannel dress curiously, and soon they grew to such intimacy that she asked Betty its price and all the secrets of its workmanship.

"How nice really human people are!" thought Betty, happily. "Now I must go," she said, looking at the clock, and finding that the manor-house luncheon hour had passed. "I 've had a splendid time."

She hurried away with the dog at her heels. The poor mongrel wanted to play, and frisked and danced until she picked up a stick and threw it far down the road, where he put after it with a wild rush, bringing it back and laying it at her feet, and begging with eyes and wagging tail and wriggling body for another chance.

When she reached the house, she waved him homeward, and walked up the pathway and sank down on the low steps. She heard voices in the drawing-room, and decided to wait outside until Miss Minturne should see her. She had carried the third volume of Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott" with her, and she began to read it.



Feeling something tug at her dress, she found that the pup had come back and was lying at her side, having selected, with fine discrimination, the soft hem of her white skirt. She closed her book and commenced patting him, for she could not fix her mind on the wonderful "Life." The memory of a startling page of her own life possessed her. Try as she would, she could not throw off the incident of the portrait. With a girl's inconsequence, she felt incensed at young Mr. Minturne; though what he had done she could not, in all fairness, put into words that would soothe the memory of her own rudeness. She knew that his only offence was in being (quite blamelessly, of course!) Madame Minturne's grandson.

Over against this damaging relationship there flashed before her his courtesy and fine bearing in a ridiculous predicament. With a mirthless smile, Betty said to herself that she could well believe that he was not in the habit of finding girls standing before his portrait and addressing it with an explosive expletive.

Betty knew that if it had been a girl she would have stayed through thick and thin to



apologize; but to apologize to a young, self-possessed, elegant man of the world, Madame Minturne's grandson —!

At the idea of meeting him again her cheeks tingled with mortification.

"Now I'll have to go home, Miss Minturne or not! How ephemeral my Noble Character has been!"

Betty, at a loss, sighed with a smile that was a mixture of rue and humor. The absurdity of the situation appealed to her in spite of everything.

Just then young Mr. Minturne came out on the porch and stood looking quizzically down at Betty and the dog. Betty could not restrain a look of dismay.

"I see you have made an interesting acquaintance," observed Minturne, assuming a casual air and glancing from Betty to the dog.

The dog returned his look unblinkingly, then, with unexpected vivacity, jumped to Mr. Minturne's feet and begged to be taken up.

"Why, what a cur you are to treat a lady so! You have execrable taste," he declared.

"I own up that I feel a little disappointed at his treatment," smiled back Betty, with an



effort. "When I graduated, a forlorn little dog came up on the stage and sat on my train, my first train, while I was saying my most affecting farewell words."

"You knew the wretch?" asked Minturne, laughing heartily at the story.

"Oh, yes. He always followed me when we took our constitutionals."

"Oh, he's going to pass it over! How fine!" she thought. Then she felt her position indefensible and uncourageous.

"Perhaps I should apologize for intruding," said Minturne.

"And I must apologize," began Betty, quickly, and her unpremeditated apology slipped out. "I hope you did n't mind being called a — I mean — I really did n't mean that quite — I was just in a bad humor."

It did Betty good to hear Minturne's laugh. She joined in, and in that happy, appreciative laugh all embarrassment was lost. His wholly unegotistic manner of putting aside something that had worried her, even though it had touched his pride, and his easy way of making a joke of it, reconciled Betty to even Madame Minturne's grandson.



While they were talking, Miss Minturne came out and proposed a horseback ride, as the old people had gone upstairs for their afternoon nap. Betty asked to be excused, for she wanted to write to Lois.

“Oh, Lois, I have so much to tell you [she wrote]. “I am writing with that perfectly gorgeous fountain pen Miss Minturne gave me at Christmas, sitting on a rock under a willow that leans sentimentally over a real brook, just like those in pictures. I can see across the valley, where there is a background of gray mist that, with the greens and yellows of the trees, makes it look like some of the old tapestries Miss Minturne has at the Studio. Now if Miss Minturne and the Scion would only ride through the valley on horseback, — they’ve just gone out on two splendid horses; the Scion is superb on horseback, — it would make me think — far-fetched! — of the Canterbury Pilgrimage.

“I described everything in my letter to my mother, the house, — it’s a love of a place, — Mr. Minturne and Madame, and how I almost threw myself into the Scion’s arms. You know I brought the third volume of Lockhart’s Life of Sir Walter, — you ought to remember, for you hooted at me for doing it, — and as I sat reading it on the portico,



with the Madame's shrill voice mingling with Sir Walter's knightly words, young Mr. Minturne came out for a breath of air, which his grandmother is deathly afraid of. He apologized for his intrusion, and I kindly forgave him for coming out on his own doorstep! Then he said something about being seated. It was, so far as I could make out, — for I was not wholly at my ease, — apologetic, too. Diplomatic manners, I suppose! Not at all like Jack, who sinks down gladly, without invitation or compunction, and rises painfully and reluctantly when at last politeness compels him. And I apologized for 'snob,' and he was just splendid about it. But I'll tell you everything when I see you.

"Oh, Lois, he loves Scott as much as I do. He knows every inch of Scotland! We had a glorious conversation. I've never heard any one talk as he did. I told him about the little boy who came into the 'Silver Lining Library' and asked me for 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel Show, by Scott.' You should have heard him laugh. He's one of those who can laugh heartily over a silly little thing, and that makes you feel so easy and comradely. Well, somehow, do you know, Lois, I felt Madame's black eyes piercing my vertebrae just then. I turned around, and there she was, peeking out of the window at us!



“Now I’m going out for a walk, then I’ll come back and finish this.

“I’ve just come back from the little shop and I’m eating some splendiferous cookies I found there.

“You should have heard the way Madame Minturne said, when I was introduced to her, ‘A working girl!’ But I am glad I am a working girl. I think so often about Lucy Larcom’s book, where she tells of those splendid Lowell girls who fifty years ago worked in the factories there in order to send their brothers to college. And they did it! Oh, why can’t I help about our mortgage!

“To-morrow we’re going home, and I’m glad. But I do hate to think of the endless commuting — I would n’t have mother know that for the world! Yet I hate the thought that I hate it more than I hate it, for it seems ungrateful to complain when one is as well off as I am. However, the atmosphere here is especially salubrious for grievances!

“By the way, the Scion is an old friend of the Kings, and he says he believes he will visit them this summer. So you will meet him!”



## XIII

### THE FIRE

**B**ETTY'S eyes flew open and in an instant she was wide awake. She did not know why. She was not conscious of having heard anything. Yet she had been sleeping soundly, and all at once she was fully awake. She lay still, listening intently. She could not hear a sound except the whir and clank of the manor windmill, the stamping of the horses in the stable, and the distant baying of a hound.

Through the broad windows at her right she could dimly make out the tall trees swaying gently in the light breeze. She strained her eyes into the dark corners of her room, but could see nothing.

"I'm growing nervous," she thought. She smiled to herself at repeating the familiar formula, for in her young healthy life she thought of "nerves" about as older people do of second childhood.



Feeling wide awake, however, she decided that a change might enable her to get to sleep more quickly, so she got out of bed and knelt at the broad sill of the low window, looking out into the peaceful night and at the friendly stars twinkling overhead.

Suddenly it seemed to her that she detected the faint smell of burning. She leaned out of the window and listened intently. She thought she could hear a faint crackling in the direction of the stable. With every nerve on edge, she turned towards it. Then she noticed that the horses were stamping excitedly. Staring fixedly at one of the stable windows, she saw a flickering light, evidently from a fire. Her heart jumped, and a lump came to her throat.

"Oh, those beautiful horses!" she cried aloud. She sprang to her feet, hurried into her kimono and slippers, and ran to Miss Minturne's room, and knocked at the door gently but decidedly.

Miss Minturne opened the door at once.

"Don't be frightened, Miss Minturne," said Betty, with forced calm, "but I fear the stable is on fire."

"We must keep it from the old people,"



returned Miss Minturne in an agitated whisper. "Run and waken the servants and I'll call Cousin Laurence."

Betty flew upstairs and aroused the servants, then down again to the first floor. Going through the dining-room, to get out by the side door, she heard the clock in the hall chime two. As she ran across the lawn to the fence that divided it from the garden, the flames broke through the upper windows of the stable.

Just then the rear door of the house was flung open, and Minturne dashed out, closely followed by the servants.

"In line to pass buckets!" he shouted.

Instantly Miss Minturne, Betty, the coachman, the butler, the cook, and the housemaids formed a line, passing the buckets from the pump to the stable and back again.

"Keep it up! I'll get the horses out," called Minturne.

Betty's heart gave a leap, then stood still. She saw him dash to the stable door, tear it open, spring in and close it after him.

It seemed ages before it was hurled back and Minturne came out, leading one of the



terrified carriage horses, which he had blindfolded with a blanket. Slamming the door behind him, he trotted the horse swiftly around to the front of the house and tied him to a tree. Back to the stable he ran and brought out the others, one by one.

Then the roof fell in with a roar, and the heat grew intolerable. The bucket passers were driven back.

"The wind's carrying sparks over on the house. We'll have to throw water on the roof," cried Minturne.

He quickly planted the ladder against the porch and clambered up.

"Stand on the ladder, Pat, and hand up the buckets. If we only had some help!" he exclaimed, pulling up a bucket.

Without waiting to hear more, Betty gathered up her kimono and ran down the walk to the gate. She recalled instantly the alarm box at the cross-roads, just beyond the old woman's shop.

Down the highway she flew, her hair streaming out behind her in the rising wind; her lithe figure bore up splendidly against its force; her light steps fell evenly on the clay road.



Running was no new thing to Betty. All her life she had loved it, and battling with the wind.

In her excitement she cried "Fire! Fire!" though there was no one to hear. There were few stars to be seen, and the moon was often obscured by clouds.

"Fire! Fire!" she cried, over and over, between panting breaths; and vibrating through the half articulate cry was the thought of Minturne. What a masterful man!

In a few minutes she reached the little shop; the old woman's head bobbed out of an upper window.

"What 's on fire?" she screamed.

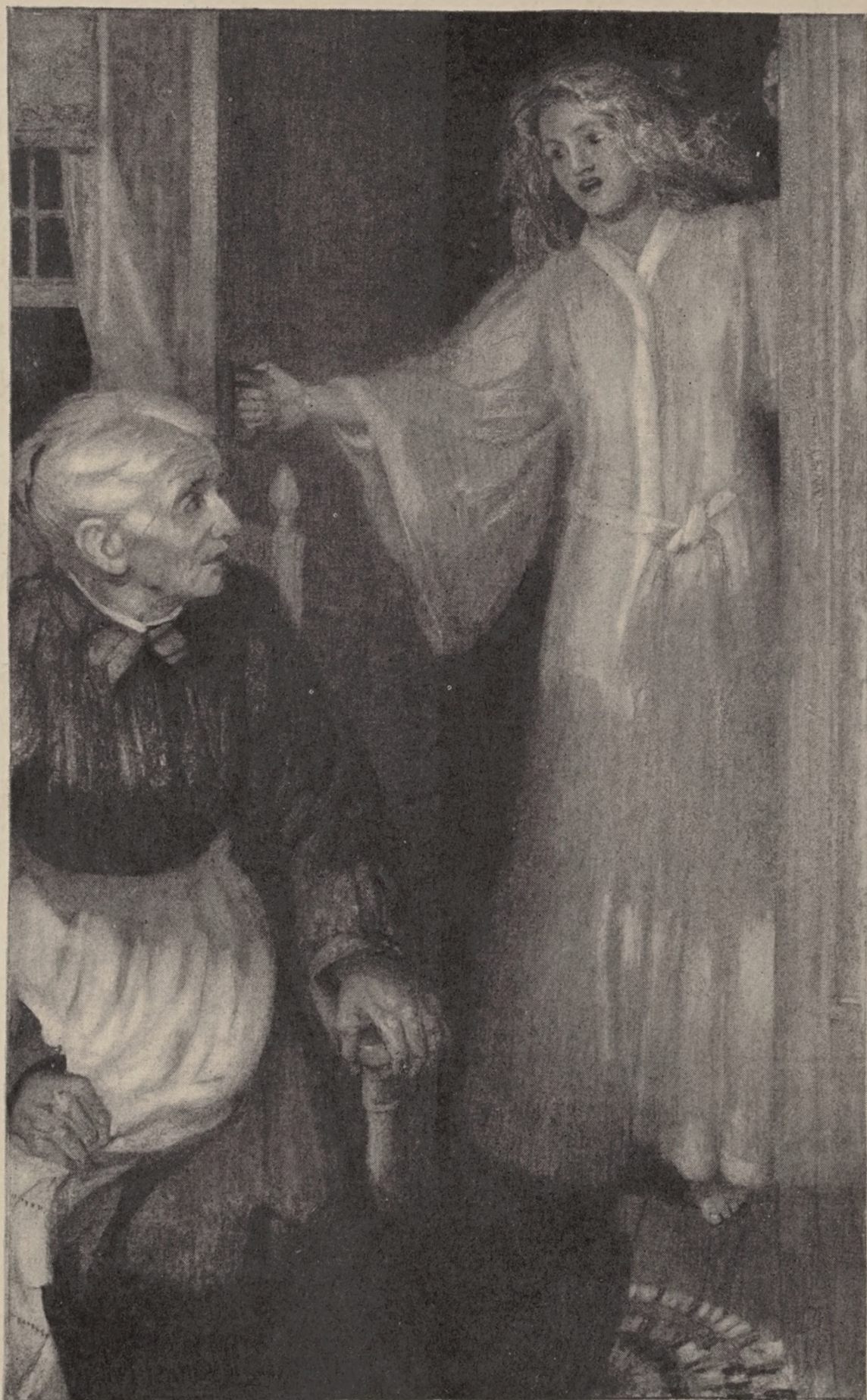
"The stable!" cried Betty, not slackening her speed.

"How did it get afire?" she shrieked after her, leaning far out on the window-sill.

Betty did not stop. A moment more and she found herself at the alarm box. Without hesitation she broke in the glass door with her bare hand and gave the hook a vigorous jerk. Instantly she heard the awesome clang of the great bell in the village tower.

Feeling, then, the strain of her long run, she





“WHY, I THOUGHT YOU WAS A GHOST!” SHE EXCLAIMED







sank down trembling by the roadside. Soon she heard the rapid beating of a gong and the shrill tooting of a whistle, and a fire engine and a hose-cart thundered by, the powerful gray horses straining against their collars as they plunged along, the engine shooting a stream of sparks high into the air.

“I must go back to the house. Maybe I can help,” she said aloud.

She stood up, then with a little cry of pain she sank back to the ground. Her slippers were gone, and her feet sadly cut and bruised. In the excitement she had not noticed it before.

With great difficulty she hobbled to the old woman's shop. There was a light in the front room, for the son had gone to help at the fire, and his mother was sitting by the window, waiting for his return with the news.

“Why, I thought you was a ghost!” she exclaimed, starting from her chair as Betty came up. “Come in, child. You done your duty, all right. Why, what a mercy does this mean?” she cried, as she saw Betty's bleeding hand and feet.

An hour later the fire engine and the hose-cart jogged past; then the son came back.



The fire was out, the old manor-house was safe. Betty had been missed, and they were searching for her.

"Here comes Master Laurence now," said the son. "Mr. Scarborough has fetched him in his automobile."

Minturne leaped out and came to the door of the shop. Betty tried to hurry forward to meet him. The old woman had lent her her number seven slippers, but the bandages which the good soul had wound around her lacerated feet made the size a matter of little consequence.

As Betty stood in the doorway, the light from the bracket lamp behind her cast fantastic shadows on the furrowed clay road outside; with her blue kimono rumpled and torn, her beautiful hair falling down her back in a tangled mass and caught with leaf and brier, and the big carpet slippers projecting from beneath her short gown, she made a picture that strangely mingled the humorous with the pathetic. She stood there, unable to speak, but immensely relieved to learn from the son that "the ingine arrove in the nick o' time" to save the house.



Minturne hastened to her, and took her uninjured hand in both of his.

“How can I thank you! How can I thank you!” he repeated.

“If I had n’t been so worried about the house, I’d have had only an exciting adventure,” said Betty, withdrawing her hand from his and leaning against the door-frame. She was beginning to feel very weak.

“I did n’t do a thing but run — and smash a little,” she added, smiling. “And I like to do both, at times!”

“You ran and smashed to good purpose to-night,” said Minturne, warmly, joining absently in Betty’s joke. “It was a mighty plucky thing, and I can never thank you enough.”

Betty was about to answer, when the two boat-like slippers caught her eyes and she began to laugh. Then she reeled. Minturne caught her in his arms, calling for water.

The shopkeeper came running with a tin cup of water and dashed it into her face. In a moment Betty was herself. It was nothing more than faintness from fatigue.

In spite of her protests, Minturne picked



her up and carried her to the car, Mr. Scarborough and the old woman helping to tuck her in among the soft lap-robcs.

As they were speeding along, Betty asked in a faint voice, yet with a note of her old-time mischievousness running through it:

"Mr. Minturne, will you make an affidavit that I fainted?"

Minturne turned with a look of wonder. He thought she was feverish from the excitement.

"Oh, I'm in my right mind," she affirmed. "My schoolmate, Lois Byrd, and I used to want to faint. She said she thought it was so 'ladylike.' She had a famous aunt who always fainted at the sight of a mouse. But we could never manage it. Now I've gone and done it!"

Minturne laughed.

"The heroine — what's her name? — of 'The Children of the Abbey' could n't have done it more completely. I'll back you up in any boast you make."

"Thank you. I've learned, though, that faints, like a good many other things, can come a moment too late. I don't feel the rapture I would have felt at fourteen."



They laughed at the nonsense. Minturne was relieved to see her in such good spirits, while Betty talked to make light of the incident.

As they were nearing the house, they went very slowly. A stream of people was returning from the fire, having remained until the last ember had died out.

Silence followed their words. There was the sound of the brook that ran, moonlight-white, through the darkling trees and cool reedy passes, its bright rhythm staccatoing against the low indefinable whir of insects.

Dawn was breaking in the east, and in the half light Minturne's face, with its smoky marks, its stern strong lines, appeared to Betty to belong to a different age, far-off and strange.

The silence was not broken again, except by Minturne's and Mr. Scarborough's questions as to how she felt, until they reached the manor, when Miss Minturne took Betty off to rest.



## XIV

### MISS JANE ARRIVES

BETTY had just attributed a new mood to their dear old home. "It's purring!" "Yes," she said, looking lovingly at the Revolutionary house, lying low on the fresh green grass, a southerly breeze rippling its vines, "it makes me think of a big white cat basking in the sunlight. It's the picture of comfort."

Mrs. Baird demurred at her figure.

"It always seems rather selfish for a cat to take the softest and warmest spot. This dear old house is generous, and would take every one under its wing. It's more like a motherly white hen."

"I agree with you, Mrs. Baird," Lois put in. "And Betty and I are happy chicks to be under its wing. And Edwyna, too," she added, looking over to the side terrace where "the set" was playing "Little Sally



Waters” and “London Bridge is Breaking Down.”

Their pleasant, lazy snatches of conversation were broken into by Jack’s familiar whistle, followed by a rollicking chantey, in the chorus of which a number of stentorian voices joined.

Betty shaded her eyes and looked expectantly at the launch, which was steaming rapidly towards their little dock.

“There are Jack, Dunny, and — yes, it is Mr. Minturne!” she said. She glanced around hastily to see if things were presentable.

Mr. Minturne was visiting the Kings, and had called several times at “Boxwood,” but he was still “company” there, so Betty rejoiced that he had not found her with the big gingham apron, in which she “helped with the luncheon dishes,” covering her pretty blue dress. This apron was a familiar sight to Jack, who had more than once volunteered to don it and take Betty’s place.

Lois hastily smoothed invisible creases out of her white linen that was not only exquisitely dainty but superlatively becoming, as Dunmore Lane’s eyes were quick to perceive.

“I’ve just come from the city,” said Min-



turne, as they came up, fanning themselves with their Panamas, "and this makes me wish I'd never have to see a city again."

"It's a *living* sort of place, is n't it? All day I have felt like stroking it," said Betty, and she told him about their discussion of its mood.

"It's a great contrast to the place I have come from, for here you see something charming everywhere you look," Minturne declared. "I took luncheon with friends who have gone to housekeeping in an apartment uptown. The street is good enough, but their dining-room is in the rear, and poor Peggy is training herself in the art of not seeing. She has all her dining-room chairs standing with their backs towards the windows. She can't shut out the view with curtains, for she needs the light."

"It takes experience and talent to 'see New York,' " said Mrs. Baird, smilingly. "But I must say that the churches there seem more beautiful than anywhere else. Perhaps it's the contrast."

"There's another thing about the city that never loses its interest to me, and that's the



patches of sky at the end of the long avenues, especially just after sunset. By the way, Miss Baird," he added slyly, turning to Betty, "in Scotland, where your eagles live, it's all beautiful."

Of course this hit set them all off.

"Now really, honestly, Mr. Minturne, did you ever see my eagles in Scotland?" pleaded Betty, entering into the joke.

"Often!" Minturne assured her. "And you'd enjoy the wild tales the people tell there, about werewolves and witches. America's badly off in the matter of folk-lore."

"Oh, but you forget our Indian tales! And as to witches, we've had them," protested Betty, stoutly. "We won't have Salem run down that way, will we, mother? All our ancestors came from there."

"Ah! That accounts for your witchery, Mistress Betty!" laughed Minturne, bowing.

Betty gave him a derisive smile.

"Witch the same are a werry proper remark," punned Jack. "And there are others, are n't there, Dunny, old man?" he added, bowing to Lois.

"Well, I should say so!" agreed Dunny,



with fervor. "Come on, Lois, I want to give Merrylegs some sugar, and I need help."

Dunny's love for the pony had lately been waxing stronger and stronger, if one could judge from the amount of sugar he fed him, and Lois's encouragement of his affection was not lost on Betty. And when it was n't the pony, it was something else. They had grown into the habit of going off together "to see something" — Betty thought the thing usually rather indefinite — some distance from the others.

"Hello! Here comes Pharaoh's chariot!" cried Jack, looking down the road. An old hack rattled up to the gate. "Company coming, Betty?" he asked, with a quizzical smile, for this particular hack was the "standing" joke — its wheels tended to immobility — of the village.

Betty and her mother looked surprised. "I can't imagine who it is," said Mrs. Baird, in a low voice, as Betty sprang up. "No one has written."

The hack door flew back on its creaking hinges. The individual within could not be seen, but an immense old-fashioned bandbox



covered with landscape paper, bundles of all sizes and shapes wrapped in newspapers, a capacious market-basket, a huge brownish umbrella, and a carpetbag that bloomed like a bed of peonies, were ejected one after another from the ancient vehicle.

Then a pair of prunella gaiters, overtopped by some inches of white stockings, started nimbly down the steps of the hack. At the sight of the familiar prunellas Betty sped down to the gate, calling back over her shoulder:

“Mother! Mother! It’s dear Miss Jane!”

Mrs. Baird hurried after her, her face alight with surprise and welcome.

The eruption of parcels had sent Jack rolling with laughter on the grass, but at Betty’s joyful cry he straightened up hastily and said to Minturne:

“I guess I put my foot in it that time!”

Minturne’s eyes, however, were following Betty, and with an “I think we can help out there,” he strode towards the group at the gate, where Betty was hugging Miss Jane, while Mrs. Baird, having quietly paid the driver, began to disentangle her from the luggage that strewed her path.



"Let me take that, please, Mrs. Baird!" called out Minturne, springing forward as she stooped for a bundle.

Betty took the huge landscape bandbox from her mother and demurely handed it to the elegant diplomat.

"Oh, this is a mere trifle," he said blandly, as he took it. "Give me some more."

"Thank you!" replied Betty. "But first you must meet one of my oldest and dearest friends, Miss Hufnagel, of Weston, Pennsylvania. Miss Jane, this is Mr. Minturne."

Mr. Minturne bowed low over his bandbox while Miss Jane studied him with the unblinking curiosity of a countrywoman who has come to the city determined to see all the sights. Then she extended a long mittened hand to him.

"Pleased to meet ye! But what might the young man's name be, Betty? I'm gettin' a leetle deaf." She leaned forward with her hand behind her ear.

"Mr. Minturne!" Betty called out.

"Huh! Never heerd no sich name before!" muttered Miss Jane, and she walked briskly towards the house.



"Betty, w'y ain't you wrote me about this perlite young man? You cert'n'y wrote enough about Brooks," demanded Miss Jane in her sharp voice, as they reached the porch.

Betty instinctively turned towards Minturne, to see whether he had heard. He was looking straight at her, and met her stolen glance with a look that was an unstudied admixture of reproach with amusement.

"I'm a blameless listener, but I have the reward of the unscrupulous one," he said, in answer to Betty's half-startled smile.

Betty arched her eyebrows sceptically, then turned to Miss Jane, though with considerably heightened color. What would Mr. Minturne think? Miss Jane had spoken as though Jack had filled her letters, and what different feelings — She heard Miss Jane speaking.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Jane. What were you saying?" she asked hurriedly.

Miss Jane did not answer, but scanned her face questioningly.

"Humph!"

"What, Miss Jane?" Betty tried to fasten her mind on the dear old friend.



"I said 'Humph!'"

Betty had a sense that the world had begun to whirl most unaccountably, if Miss Jane saw something she did n't see, and — yes, she did wish Miss Jane had n't said that about dear old Jack. How suddenly he had become "dear old Jack" she did not take time to think.

Jack was presented in due form and received a more cordial greeting, as Miss Jane had become familiar with his name through Betty's letters, for she had a "Pennsylvania Dutch" woman's natural reserve, and in addition the distrust of strangers of a woman who has lived all her life in a rustic community.

Edwynna came running around the house to see who had arrived, and Miss Jane met this important new member of the household with the apparently sceptical hope "that she was a good leetle girl," much to Edwynna's surprise. So far in her life, visitors had happily taken that for granted.

"Now, dear Miss Jane, let me show you to your room. You must be tired after your long trip," suggested Mrs. Baird.



"Tired? Shucks!" said Miss Jane, crisply. "I done a batch o' bread afore sunup, an' I feel spry's a kitten," they heard her answer, as she mounted the steps to her room.

"So that's Miss Jane! Well, she's a peach!" said Jack. "She ran me through with that sharp look of hers."

"She's a grand woman," said Betty, gravely. "A heroine! She's been a seamstress all her life, in a narrow valley on the Susquehanna. She supported her father and mother while they lived. Her father was 'doless' and her mother 'poorly' as they say there. Then she helped her sister, who had a drunken husband and a lot of children. She's never complained, and she'd be insulted if you said a word to her about her self-sacrifice. She always tried to make people believe that her father was 'poorly' too, and could n't work. She never mentioned her brother-in-law. Oh, she's full of pride!"

"Bully for Miss Jane!" Jack cried admiringly, for he felt that he already knew her well, from Betty's talk about her.

"She's certainly a brave one!" exclaimed Minturne. "I hope I shall become well ac-



quainted with her. It's unusual to find such characters nowadays. No doubt there are many of them, but I have n't happened to run across them."

"She'll make it lively enough for you!" warned Betty, laughing at her memories of Miss Jane's sharp tongue. "You'll not have a failing that she won't hold up to you. Yet all the time you'll feel that it's not malicious in the slightest."

"It may sound conceited," laughed back Minturne, "but all you say only makes me more eager to know her better."

"I wish she'd hurry and come down," said Jack. "She really does n't need an hour to take off even that coal-scuttle bonnet, and I'll bet she's not the kind to lie down in the afternoon."

"You may be sure she is n't. I don't know just what she may be doing, but probably she's insisting on helping my mother at something or other."

"From all you have told me about Miss Jane," said Minturne, thoughtfully, "I should judge her to be a good deal like Professor Wayte of Oxford. When Professor Freeman



was once asked what Professor Wayte was doing, he replied: 'I don't know, but I should suppose he is sitting in his chair, thinking how he can do some kind act to some one, or else doing it.' ”



## XV

### THE TWINE WASH-RAG

**P**RESENTLY Miss Jane and Mrs. Baird came out on the veranda. Although a woman of sixty, Miss Jane had all the vivid interest in life of a young girl, and now in the home of the people she loved and in whose friendship she felt secure, she was experiencing a traveller's delight in new sights and surroundings.

Her tall, gaunt figure, clad in rusty bombazine, was replete with nervous energy; her gray hair was gathered into a tight little knot at the back of her small head; a pair of iron-rimmed spectacles surmounted her rather sharp nose. She walked spryly to the top of the steps and looking over the rims of her spectacles, called briskly, beckoning with her lean forefinger:

“'Liz'beth, come here oncet!”



Betty flew over to her, and taking the low steps two at a time, was at her side in an instant.

"Here 's somepin fer you. It ain't worth nothin', but you was so fond of your bead necklace when you was a little girl, that I made this fer you."

Miss Jane handed her a bead reticule which she had worked with many an elaborate and painstaking stitch. It was a perfect copy of a century-old bag, charmingly designed in dull colors, and was not unlike those that were being carried by well-bred girls at the dictates of fickle fashion.

"Oh, Miss Jane, it 's beautiful! And you made it for me!" Betty threw her young arms around the spare, rigid shoulders, kissing her again and again; though as usual where Miss Jane was concerned, Betty did n't know whether to laugh or to cry, for though her deeds were so unselfish, her manner was always positively threatening when she feared she was about to be thanked for them.

"Ach, that ain't worth a row o' shucks." She pushed Betty aside, and thrusting her hand deep down into her skirt pocket, drew



out a twine wash-rag. "I did n't have nothin' fer that perlite young man what helped me, so I wanter give him this here wash-rag. That red border won't run. It's fast."

Betty's eyes twinkled; but she hesitated. Would it be fair to Miss Jane to allow her to put herself in a position that would make her appear ridiculous to people who did not understand her peculiarities and love them, as they themselves did. She knew that Jack would understand, for she and Lois had told him a great deal about her. But what of Mr. Minturne? Betty's mouth grew firm.

"He's a gentleman. I know he'll understand," she said to herself.

"Come, Miss Jane!" she cried, putting her hand in Miss Jane's arm. "Let's give it to him right away."

Miss Jane would not budge. "I won't do no such thing, child. You give it to him."

Betty walked towards Mr. Minturne thoughtfully, stretching out the wash-rag, then folding it to a neat little square. She could n't be quite sure of the wisdom of giving it. Yet she knew that Miss Jane would be disappointed if she could not, in her favorite



way, acknowledge Mr. Minturne's courtesy in carrying her parcels.

"Well, it's time I trust him. And I do," was the way she summed up her cogitations, with a characteristic dash of her hand over her bright hair, as though she had smoothed all difficulties out of her mind.

Minturne noticed that her usually merry face was grave and preoccupied.

"By the way, Mr. Minturne," she began lightly, "I think you must have second sight. Or is it plain insight? Like your Professor Wayte, she was thinking of something kind to do, and it was for you! Miss Jane is so grateful for your services that she asked me to give you this."

For a moment Minturne looked down at the gift in his hand, evidently mystified. Jack, who had seen a succession of these wash-rags come to the Bairds from Miss Jane's kind and busy fingers, recognized it at once, and his eyes flashed mischievously. Then Minturne made it out, and with a pleased glance at Betty, he examined the fast-dyed wash-rag attentively.

"Well, if that is n't about the nicest thing that has happened to me in many a long



day!" he exclaimed, and hurried over to Miss Jane.

"I do thank you, Miss Hufnagel —" he began; but Miss Jane interrupted him, determined to frustrate his efforts to thank her.

"This here 's an awful nice place, ain't it is?" She looked admiringly around at the house and the garden.

Betty came to the relief of Mr. Minturne, who was somewhat embarrassed by his first experience with the quaint Pennsylvania Dutch idiom and peculiar intonation. "Oh, Miss Jane, you know Lois is here, don't you? She and Mr. Lane are feeding the pony. Let 's go after them."

Just then Lois and Dunny appeared, and Betty hurried to meet them. "Oh, Lois, guess who is here!" she cried.

But Lois had spied Miss Jane's tall figure and was running towards her, joining Betty in her jubilations.

"Miss Jane, won't you come down to the wharf and see us off?" asked Jack, as he shook hands with her at the porch.

"Oh, do let us go, Miss Jane!" Betty threw an arm around her waist, and they hurried to



a point that overlooked the landing. Miss Jane stared wonderingly at the young men's duck suits, and shook her head.

"Them white suits o' theirs must make their mothers an awful wash, ain't, Betty? But I guess they must have hired girls to help 'em do 'em up," she concluded, brightening.

The two stood on the bank and waved farewells as the graceful launch started off.

"Oncet I rode on a packet boat on the canal. I was leetle then, jest about knee high to a grasshopper," Miss Jane murmured. "I don't think them lunches half as nice as packets. No, indeed, they ain't!" she added energetically, looking after the handsome boat.

She turned and looked at Betty, who was watching the men jump from the launch to the Kings' yawl, and whose eyes followed the yawl until the peak of the white sail, showing a moment against the deep blue of the sky, sank out of sight behind the golden sandbars.

Miss Jane paused, then she added what she had not intended in the beginning, as she observed Betty's face, the light in the dark eyes,



the exquisite color on the oval cheeks, the wistful smile on the sweet lips. "I guess them lunches don't seem so nice because I ain't young no more yet."

She realized that youth had cast the same mysterious radiance over the Pennsylvania canal-boat that it was now throwing for Betty over the trim yawl.

"What did you say, Miss Jane?" Betty asked, hugging her closely, for Miss Jane had spoken under her breath.

"Nothin'."

"Own up, Miss Jane, you feel exactly as I do," said Betty, looking into the sharp blue eyes that were now a little misty. "I mean that I always feel sad when I see a boat pushing off and watch it sail towards the horizon and then suddenly disappear. It's a farewell sort of a way."

"I see you're still a high-flyer, 'Liz'beth," said Miss Jane, testily. She had no sympathy with sentiment, or at least, none that she was willing to show. "I guess a body can find a good bit in this world to make us sad that ain't moonshine and water and boats."

She took the sting from her words by pat-



ting Betty's hand lovingly, then exclaimed, to hide her feelings:

"My, 'Liz'beth, how strubbled your hair is!" and she gently pushed back the fine, loose curls.

Betty laughed. She wanted to tell Miss Jane that she had grown very practical, but she did n't have the gift of ready self-excuse. However, Miss Jane helped her.

"You always was fond o' potry, but your mother says how you're right smart at figurin' and been savin' and countin' your pennies. That 's right. A penny saved is a penny earned. But you 're a good girl, 'Liz'beth," she finished briskly, as they started back towards the house.

For several days Miss Jane was silent as to her reasons for coming to "Boxwood." That she came unexpectedly was not surprising, as she loved surprises, and moreover it was always the unexpected that happened where she was concerned; but the fact that she had evidently come to stay a long time, as her baggage indicated, was puzzling.

Gradually it leaked out that her two nephews were out of work and that Miss Jane's sewing



days in Weston were at an end. A new and fashionable dressmaker, with the sign "Madame Bienvenu, Modes" in large gold letters on her door, had usurped the place so long held by Miss Jane. No one wished for plain sewing now, and the new dressmaker made all the Weston gowns except the increasing number that were bought "ready-made" in Philadelphia.

Miss Jane had come to seek work in the city!

It came out only in disconnected words and sentences, for it was hard to break a life-long habit of reticence. Abruptly Miss Jane had begun to ask for means of getting employment for herself and then for the "little boys," one of whom was eighteen, the other nearing seventeen.

Mrs. Baird and Betty encouraged her heartily, and promised to begin at once to try to find places for the nephews, but they soon saw that her chief anxiety was to find work for herself, to help rather than to be helped.

When they were alone, Betty turned to Mrs. Baird.

"Why, mother—" She hesitated, while a



look of gentle brooding came into her beautiful eyes. "Why, mother," she repeated, "can it be that Miss Jane is — superannuated? A superannuated seamstress?"

Betty smiled a little at her unexpected alliteration, then her eyes sought the floor in perplexity.

"Dear Miss Jane!" said gentle-hearted Mrs. Baird, lovingly. "It is good to see her. I can find some work for her here in the village, and she will be able to preserve her so dearly loved independence. But she must first have a good long vacation."

"Which you know perfectly well she will never take, mother, darling. But I think I can get places for the boys. They are rather bright. You know I went to school with one of them. Jack will help me, and so will Mr. Anstice."

"Your father says office boys are in great demand. They can get six or seven dollars a week, each, and with their thrifty habits and the rent from their little home in Weston, I believe they can manage very well."

In less than a week Betty had secured positions for both boys, the older with Jack, at



eight dollars per week, and the younger with Mr. Anstice at seven. There was promise of advancement in both places if they proved reliable, "which they certainly are, for they are Miss Jane's nephews," Betty commented emphatically.

Lois offered Miss Jane a loan to bring the two boys to New York, but Miss Jane insisted that she had enough, and in a short time the three began the task, so new and strange to them, of living in a tiny flat in the city. To the boys' salary Miss Jane was able to add her own earnings as her exquisite plain sewing became known to the ladies of Hobart through Mrs. Baird and Betty, and with the rent-money from Weston they were soon receiving a considerable sum each month.

"Lois, I have such a queer association of ideas," said Betty. They were having their evening walk up and down under the firs and elms that bordered the path in front of the house. "You know that the basement in our Studio building is empty, and Miss Minturne will rent it only to extraordinarily desirable people. Mr. Anstice laughs at her and says she will never rent it, but she says she does n't



care; she must have a neat-looking basement. Her Studio demands artistic surroundings. Now, since Miss Jane has come, I can see in plain block letters on the basement door 'Pennsylvania Dutch Cooking.'"

"Why, Betty," exclaimed Lois, reproachfully, "do you think Miss Jane could run a restaurant?"

"Miss Jane! No, indeed. But you know her sister is much younger, and she is the best cook in all Weston, and it's the best kind of characteristic Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. Her coffee and coffee-cake are just wonders. You see coffee-cake here, of course, but the real Dutch article is as different from that as — as — from leather! And her sponge cake! And her schmier kase! And her apple butter! And her raisin pies! And her chicken pot-pie! Now you know her daughters are Dunkers, and how cute and fetching they'd be as waitresses with immaculate close-fitting caps and enormous white aprons!"

"It would take! I know it would!" exclaimed Lois, enthusiastically. "You must let me start them. Miss Jane could not object to a business loan."



“Yes, and Miss Minturne would let her have it for a low rent, and she could depend on Miss Minturne’s customers for patronage. They often ask for some nice place. Then my father and I would be delighted to go there, and there ’s a start.”

When Betty broached the plan the next day, Miss Minturne was much pleased. The windows could be neatly curtained in barred muslin, she said, and Betty guaranteed that the place would be spotless.

With characteristic energy Miss Minturne and Betty had Mrs. Gomp, Miss Jane’s sister, installed in short order. The walls were tinted a delicate yellow, and Miss Minturne lent her old brasses and coppers with blue platters to put on a narrow shelf, forming a frieze around the room.

The fresh-faced Dutch maidens, with their stiffly starched caps and aprons, made a bewitching picture framed in such appropriate surroundings, for on the high old dresser the pewter shone as it had in its Pennsylvania home, and the conservative Dutch women carried their customs and their atmosphere unspoiled into their new environment.



From the beginning, these three of "The Harmless People," as the Dunkers used to be called, bustled around in good old housewifely fashion, and treated the tea-room in the same pleasant, homely manner they always had their own well-scrubbed kitchen. New York is hungry for home life, and when these plain motherly souls came into the dining-room, all genuine solicitude for their guests, as if by their own hearthside and without pecuniary considerations, they created an atmosphere very grateful to the homeless New Yorkers.



## XVI

### BETTY ORGANIZES A CITY HISTORY CLUB

BETTY took her vacation in August, and every day Edwyna claimed her as her own particular property. Dottie, her nearest neighbor, never failed to pay her a daily visit, and Edwyna's "set," the girls who welcomed Lois at the May-day party, were usually in the group that surrounded Betty, while she, her mother, Miss Jane, and Lois read and sewed on the broad veranda or under the firs. Most of these girls were several years older than Edwyna, though Dottie, of course, was the pet and baby of the "set."

To-day they dragged Betty off to one end of the veranda, with the demand for "a long, long story." Thrusting her by main force into one of the huge porch chairs, they ranged themselves round her.

Quaint, charming Christine Stopford dropped on the floor, wholly indifferent to



the fate of the dainty pongee coat that had just come from Paris, for Christine's laughing blue eyes "saw only Virgil" when Betty was near, and her fertile fancy was busy with delightful anticipations of an enchanting story. Thoughtful Phyllis Grey sank gracefully into a steamer chair, her skirts falling naturally into symmetrical folds; while Priscilla Whitford, enthusiastic and endowed with initiative, sat on the top step, switching back her long brown hair as a preliminary to listening "without any bother."

Dottie arranged her stiffly starched skirts decorously, looking prim and chubby as she outdid her elders in dignity and propriety in her duteous though, alas! short-lived recollection of her mother's parting admonition "not to get mussed." Virginia Low, after spinning around on her toes like a gay little top, sat with unaccustomed immobility near Betty. While pretty, cheerful Marybelle Stratton, sweet Mary Breslin, and dainty Nettie Hood, the little bookworm, drew a settle up to the group.

Edwynna balanced on the edge of a brilliant red hammock, and holding on firmly with



both hands, kept herself swinging by an industrious digging of her shining shoe tips into the floor. Her black hair was parted in the middle and held back by a Roman striped ribbon. Edwyna was still "passionately fond of hair ribbons," and they managed somehow always to be the perkier little ribbons in the set, though Christine's "topknot," as Betty called the broad bow on the top of the golden head, was, also in Betty's language, "the most lovable."

Their differing characteristics were of unfailing interest to Betty, and their pretty cajoling was bewitching to her as she looked at them with sweet laughing eyes while they huddled close around her in their eagerness and importunity.

This was by no means their first meeting with her. During the winter "the set" had encircled the fire in the old-fashioned hall, and Betty, on the long sofa, with a child snuggled up close on each side of her, — it was the post of honor, at which they took turns, — told about her boarding-school days at "The Pines," when a "really-righty story" was demanded to vary the legends of which Betty



had an unfailing store. The history of The Order of The Cup, which Betty had founded among her friends at Weston, was of unceasing interest.

"I don't see why we can't have a club of some kind," cried Priscilla to-day, springing up in her eagerness and throwing herself on her knees before Betty.

"Oh, Betty, let's have a club! Let's!" came a chorus, even Dottie lisping out enthusiasm as rapidly as nature would allow, "Letth! Letth!"

Christine and Phyllis, with their arms around each other, crowded nearer, for all were now on their feet. Edwyna jumped out of the hammock and ran to Betty, hugging her about the neck. Priscilla had both her hands, while Dottie, in a mad burst of the contagious enthusiasm, tumbled headlong into her lap.

"Oh, children, children, you're smothering me!" cried Betty.

"Oh, please excuse us!" said the older girls in a breath, stepping back hastily.

"You darling polite children!" cried Betty, who saw in a flash that their courteous little hearts had reproached them for appearing to



be rude to her. She gathered them into her arms, stretching out her hands to catch the very last one of them.

“Now I wonder who’s

The old woman who lived in a shoe,  
She had so many children she didn’t know what to do!”

she chanted and panted; and all, laughing, joined in.

Phyllis stepped back and fell into a brown study. Then she turned and whispered something to Christine, who clapped her hands delightedly and pushed her towards Betty.

“I’ve just thought of a plan for a club, and Christine likes it —” began Phyllis.

“Excuse me, but it’s perfectly splendid!” interrupted Christine, her eyes glowing like stars. She pressed closer and hugged Phyllis’s arm.

“Good, Phyllis! Let us hear what it is.” And turning to Edwyna and Dottie, who were engaged in a warm-day wrangle, she added: “You two children sit there on that settle and say ‘prunes and prisms!’ while we talk over Phyllis’s idea.”

Little Dottie, with literal obedience, climbed



up on the settle and began to pout out from her cherubic mouth "Prunth and prithimth," causing unbounded hilarity among the older girls. But Edwynna's black eyes flashed, and two red spots came to her olive cheeks as she walked with dignity to the hammock. Betty took in the situation at a glance, and her eyes twinkled. She motioned the other children to sit down near her.

"You've been telling us about the old Presbyterian Church and other historical buildings here," said Phyllis, "and I remember that my cousin, Margaret Weldon, who lives in New York, belongs to the City History Club connected with her father's parish. She just loves it, and they go around to see places. Last week they went in an automobile to that church where the Prince of Wales's three feathers are —"

Phyllis paused, looking inquiringly at Betty.

"That's St. Paul's, the only surviving church of colonial times in New York City. The Prince of Wales's feathers are at the top of the old pulpit."

"Why could n't we have a City History Club?" demanded Priscilla.



A round of applause met this suggestion, and Edwynna and Dottie ran to join the group.

"I think that would be very interesting," said Christine, in a deliberative way. "I have always liked those little accounts of real things in the back of 'St. Nicholas,' and now we can have our own history!"

"Well, since the idea meets the approval of this august assembly, we may as well organize and have a History Club. Of course I can't give much time to it, but Lois will help, and you children can soon carry it on for yourselves, with a leader."

"My cousin Margaret is coming to spend part of the summer with us, and she's fifteen and has been to boarding-school, so she must know a great deal and could help us," suggested Phyllis.

"She would make an excellent leader, and if she's been at boarding-school, why, she must be wise!" laughed Betty. Standing up, and throwing her arms around Phyllis and Christine, she led the way into the book-room, where they found paper and pens ready to hand in organizing the new club, for Betty



never allowed the grass to grow under her feet when anything like this came up.

Even the children felt the charm of the little book-room. It was directly back of the long drawing-room, and wholly fulfilled the saying attributed to Thomas à Kempis: "I have sought rest everywhere, and found it nowhere save in a little corner, with a little book." Two deep windows overlooked the flower garden, and a door at the side, opening out on the side porch, stood open. The room was flooded with sunshine, and gay arabesques of vines and shrubs danced on the polished floor.

"Here 's the very spot for the organization of the History Club," said Betty. "A veranda is too frivolous. It would do for a — well, say a dancing club."

"Shall we have a president?" began Edwyna, eagerly, and perhaps a trifle anxiously.

"Oh, my, yes; let 's have it grand and in full regalia."

"I move that Phyllis be made president, because the plan is hers, and she would make a splendid president, anyway," said generous Christine.



The previous winter she had belonged to a little society in her school, and the unconscious ease with which she made this motion excited her friends' admiration.

"I did n't know we had such a parliamentary among us," said Betty, smiling down on the sweet upturned face.

Christine blushed, but looked gratified, too, for it is seldom that our hard-earned school accomplishments fit in so pat.

"I second Christine's motion," said Nettie, rising and bowing primly to Betty, for she, too, belonged to a society.

"Priscilla is a lovely writer," urged Christine, when the subject of a secretary for the Club came up.

Priscilla was elected forthwith.

At this, Betty noticed that Edwyna's face had grown very red, and there was a suspicious winking of her black eyes. She understood.

Edwyna was ambitious. She had a child's desire to be at the head of everything. This was the source of her frequent quarrels with the younger but not less ambitious Dottie. It had amused Betty, until she considered that love of power, the desire to be the leader,



was growing to be the ruling idea with Edwyna in all plays and games.

Betty suspected that she, as the cousin of the Club's leader, had expected to be chosen for some office, and that there was — strange as it might seem — genuine heart-burning in that little circle. She looked curiously at Christine, to see whether she felt her lack of a post of honor, and was delighted to find her forehead unclouded, and that Virginia, Marybelle, Mary, and Nettie were equally well contented.

Excusing herself to the girls, Betty went out on the porch to consult her mother.

"What shall I do, Carissima?" she asked, sitting down by her mother's side and giving her a quick review of the past hour. "I feel cross with Edwyna, for she is the only one who has shown an ugly spirit to-day."

"Poor little Edwyna!" said Mrs. Baird, smiling, and stroking one of Betty's hands tenderly. "She'll outgrow this trait, if we are careful."

"Well, it's perfectly horrid now!" burst out Betty, mortified at her cousin's behavior.

"My daughter, you can broaden her nature



by showing her models of patriotism and disinterestedness, and present to her and to all the girls a standard of right feeling towards others. American history is crowded with glorious examples of unselfishness."

"Oh, that 's a splendid idea!" cried Betty, springing to her feet and walking up and down impetuously. "I see my way. I'll try to help them get away from their own little selves — yet that 's not easy," she added, humbled by the thought of herself as a leader. Her own imperfections were well known to her.

Hastening back to the book-room, Betty found that Edwyna had left the group, and was haughtily sitting in an immense wing cosey-chair, engaged in writing a letter, — an arduous task for most children. With Edwyna, however, the art was natural, and at this moment of her slight — as she conceived it to be — she had hurried to "show those girls" that she too had her gifts! Her chin was up in the air and her whole manner invited inspection of her letter.

The girls pressed around her and exclaimed with genuine big-sisterly pride at her accomplishment.



"Oh, Betty, Edwyna has written the cutest letter!" cried Virginia.

Mary took the letter from Edwyna's unresisting hand and showed it with much glee to Betty. As it so often happens, Edwyna's naughty pretensions were immediately recognized and flattered, and won the girls to beg for her the proud position of corresponding secretary.

Betty shook her head disapprovingly.

"That position is not needed in the Club now, but Edwyna may hold it." She spoke sternly, and the girls opened their eyes.

"Now let us go out on the porch, for I'm going to preach," she went on happily.

The threatened ordeal did not appear at all disagreeable to the girls, if twinkling eyes and dimpling cheeks meant anything. Quite fearlessly they filed out after Betty.

"It's good for children to be preached to. As 'April showers bring May flowers,' so well-done duties bring heart beauties! How's that for a rhyme?"

The girls all laughed, looking at each other delightedly, for it was always such delicious fun to be near Betty. She leaned against the



white fluted pillar, and, raising an interrogatory hand, asked:

“ ‘Breathes there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!’ ”

Betty broke off to wave the girls, who were standing in a semicircle around her, to seats.

“Sit down, girls, on these cushions. Those in blue and white are ‘The Pines’ pillows, and are the seats of honor. This vermilion one is for naughty little girls,” she added, smiling on Edwyna and Dottie.

With a wicked flash of her huckleberry-black eyes, Edwyna plumped down on it, and pulled Dottie, struggling indignantly and insisting that she was a “dood dirl,” down beside her.

“It’s a great privilege, young ladies,” began Betty, “to be American citizens. I believe every one of us has a Revolutionary ancestry, and I do think it’s about time that we know something definite of these forefathers of ours. This City History Club will meet regularly, and I hope that through it we shall learn to appreciate better what they did for us.



Though more than two hundred years have passed, we should still be grateful to the early settlers of our country."

"Hear! hear!" cried a manly voice, and Craig Ellsworth, his oars balanced in his right hand, appeared round the corner of the porch to take his little sister home in his boat.

"Oh, you, Craig! Come up. Sit down. We're something very important now. Guess!"

"Oh, bother! You know, Betty, I never could guess anything," retorted Craig, with an air of boredom, while he threw himself down comfortably on the top step and eyed the girls with an amused smile.

"Sure enough, poor fellow! You can't guess anything, can you?" Betty returned, pityingly. Then with an imposing manner, she announced: "We are the City History Club!"

"The City History Club! Gee, what's that?" he exclaimed, looking around the circle again.

"Please exercise your imagination a little," she replied crushingly. "My plan is this," continued Betty, turning to the children: "we



can beg, borrow, or hire an automobile or a hay wagon or something, and visit the places around Long Island, then go to New York, for that city was one of the storm centres of the Revolution."

"Mr. Brooks will take us in his big red automobile, Cousin Betty," broke in Edwyna, surprised into the rudeness of an interruption by her interest. "He told me last evening that he 'd do anything for me."

At this the older girls looked disconcerted. They did not know how Betty would take this liberty with the name of one they looked upon as her special friend.

"That 's an idea! He 'll be our knight to take us on our pilgrimages. That it 's a red touring car instead of a snow-white palfrey or a coal-black steed makes no difference except in poetry — and speed!"

"Won't you let me go, too, please?" pleaded Craig. "I 'll be court jester, falconer, or any old thing."

"Oh, you may go as our — our — History is your specialty, is n't it? You can prepare the itinerary for our trip, and call out the points of interest through a big megaphone."



“Ah, you ’re too good!”

“Mr. and Mrs. King would take us, and Mr. Minturne, too,” said Edwynna, her black head nodding positively.

“Oh, everybody will!” cried Betty, enthusiastically.

Betty’s love for the early days was genuine, not inspired merely by pride of family and possessions, but by a realization, rare in a young girl, of the splendor of the colonial dream and its magnificent and providential realization in the War for Independence; and she could feel keenly the hardships of those brave pioneers, north and south and west, during their wars with hostile Indians.

The children had begun to chatter busily among themselves, allowing Betty freedom to think it over and to tell Craig about the Club, and to ask his help, which he gladly promised.

“When Miss Byrd comes in, we’ll ask her about her home in Maryland, and perhaps she ’ll invite us to visit her. It’s a quaint colonial village.”

“Oh, splendid!” cried Priscilla, while Chris-



tine clapped her pink palms together delightedly, and gave herself that little shuddering hug expressive of complete delight.

"I 'd love to see Maryland, especially Baltimore," said Phyllis, "for my mother was born there and I 've always wanted to see it."

"Washington is n't very far from Baltimore, is it, Betty?" asked Virginia, snuggling close to Betty and looking up into her face.

"Not very," answered Betty, patting the brown freckled cheek.

"And I 'd love to visit Virginia," said Priscilla, "for my grandmother came from there."

Betty and Craig joined in a hearty laugh. As soon as Betty could get breath, she said:

"You dear things, you 'll drag me all around this blessed country if you don't stop soon! Now let 's get down to business. Stop laughing, Craig, or we 'll not let you take us all over New York, flourishing a big megaphone."

Betty then instructed the girls to hunt up some historical fact about Hobart, or any place within easy driving distance, and they would talk it over the next Saturday afternoon. Even if two hit on the same subject, she said, it would be interesting to see it from



two different points of view. She asked them to talk over village traditions with old people and write them out, and to give a description of any antique piece of furniture or china or brass or silver they possessed. It would all help to construct a picture of those splendid early days.

Betty paused for breath. "There! That's a speech for you!"

"Thank you, Betty," said Phyllis, rising. "I do think you are so kind to take up your time for us in this way."

"Oh, I love it! Otherwise I might not be so 'kind,'" laughed Betty. "Now Lois and I are going out for a drive behind the fattest, laziest, dearest pony on Long Island. Craig, I know you have to take Dottie home. Come over this evening, and tell us all about Columbia."

That night, after her bedtime story, Edwyna murmured her little prayer beside Betty, then jumped up rather hastily to hear her "Sandman's story." But Betty gently drew her down again and knelt by her side.

"May we be glad when others are glad, and sorry when they are sorry. May we be glad



when others succeed, and sorry when they fail."

After this significant prayer Betty kissed her good-night and was about to close the door, when she heard Edwyna calling to her in a little voice. Betty ran over to her, and Edwyna threw one arm around her neck and drew her ear down close to her mouth, and whispered "Amen!"

Betty was never certain whether Edwyna had given way to unaccustomed contrition, or had followed an impish impulse, but she was wise enough not to propound the riddle to Edwyna.



## XVII

MISS SNELL

**M**ISS Minturne and Mr. Anstice were married very quietly on a brilliant day in early October, and at once started on a year's journey round the world. Betty and Lois went down to the pier to see them off, and threw many kisses to the handsome, happy bride, and waved farewells with dainty handkerchiefs, which they had to apply industriously to overflowing eyes as soon as their backs were turned. They were two very disconsolate girls when they took the train for Hobart, Betty thinking of the long year before she should see her friend again, Lois concerned more than she would admit about Betty's future in her chosen work, for Miss Minturne had sold her business to a Miss Snell, giving Betty, however, a one-fourth interest "as a token of her love."

For two years the dream, the romance of Betty's young life, had been to help her father



free their home from its mortgage, so they could look the dear old house in the face and say: "You are ours. No one shares you with us." Of course this day-dream was not all-absorbing, for Betty's life, like that of all young happy things, had many mingling threads of interest.

In spite of this debt, Betty's home was always cheerful. Mrs. Baird never discussed at meals or other family gatherings the financial problems that occupied her mind. When the inevitable interest was about to fall due, she and Betty would have a quiet little talk over ways and means.

Usually, though, day after day passed in unbroken sunshine for the girls, and youth and health, in themselves antidotes to foreboding, kept the big old-fashioned rooms filled with laughter, music, dancing, and merry rompings. There are few boys or girls who, like the youthful Warren Hastings, make a vow to redeem the stately possessions of their ancestors, and cling through life, for good or ill, to the child's day-dream.

"Boxwood" was the only real home Betty had ever known, and perhaps her devotion to



it surpassed that of those who have had the shelter of a house that has "always been in the family." Her only other home had been the manse in Weston, and there many an official — or officious — member cautioned the little Betty to "be careful, because it was n't her own house, but was church property." Even Mrs. Baird, in excessive conscientiousness, would occasionally remind Betty to be careful of the paint or paper, because they belonged to the church. For Betty, then, a place of their own was an introduction not only to a genuine home, but to liberty.

When Miss Minturne gave her the interest in the business, Betty saw that if the Studio of Design was carried on as it had been, she could, with her salary and her share of the profits, add enough to her father's savings in two or three years to cancel the mortgage.

Naturally she was full of glee over her partnership. It was quite wonderful to be able to say "our Studio" with the feeling of one-fourth proprietorship; though this feeling, it is true, was not wholly new, for Betty had so identified herself with Miss Minturne's interests that "our Studio" had always slipped



easily from her tongue, especially as Miss Minturne herself never used the excluding "my."

For a few days, then, Betty walked on rose-colored clouds. But only for a few days. Soon there came a storm-cloud that threatened their rosy hue.

Of course, Lois and Betty had wondered what manner of person Miss Snell would be, though, to be sure, at their age a new personality in the business did not seem at all portentous; and, moreover, at first sight there was nothing in Miss Snell's appearance to arouse apprehension, even if she was exactly Miss Minturne's opposite. She was short and stout, and entirely lacked that grace that made Miss Minturne distinctive.

She was younger than Miss Minturne. Her suave manner, combined with her large, full gray eyes that seemed to embrace the whole world in charity, gave an impression of benevolence. On the surface her nature was kind. It went out in all sorts of spontaneous acts; yet she soon wearied of any one who interfered, however slightly or unintentionally, with her liberty or with her self-love.

The key to her attitude, when she took



charge of the Studio, was jealousy of her predecessor's influence with her associates and clients. Accordingly, she began at once to change everything in order to undervalue Miss Minturne, and to show that now she was the "boss." Jealousy, indeed, so worked on her undisciplined nature that very soon she began to dismiss the old helpers one by one.

Betty was tactful and just, but she found that Miss Snell was high-handed and was determined to run things as she pleased, without regard to her junior partner or reference to past policies or successes of the Studio.

"This place needs a perfect revolution!" snapped Miss Snell, as she bounced into the room where Betty was finishing a water-color sketch for the decoration of a house, for which plans had been drawn before Miss Minturne sold the Studio.

At these words, now used for the fortieth time, it seemed to Betty, she felt two spots flame resentfully in her cheeks. However, she looked up inquiringly, and Miss Snell had lost her temper to such an extent that Betty's slight withdrawal at the word "revolution" passed unnoticed.



Miss Snell did not continue. She hustled up to the desk and leaned over Betty's chair, glanced at her drawing, then snatched it up, soiling it as she rumbled it heedlessly between her fingers.

Betty watched with indignant eyes, but she restrained her temper, and as she looked at the weak, incompetent woman, once more the whole situation flashed through her mind. Miss Snell plumed herself on the fact that she had never studied artistic decoration; she had "picked it up; it came naturally," she said. Before many days had passed it was not necessary for her to insist on her first statement. It was only too easily believed by those who had been with Miss Minturne. That "it came naturally" remained to be proved.

"She is untrained," Betty thought, "and does n't know how to carry on this work, and it irritates her. But she won't acknowledge it to herself, or, of course, to any one else. That makes her ugly about Miss Minturne and every one here."

Miss Snell was holding the drawing at arm's length, and examining it through half-closed eyes.



"This will never do, never in the world! I see I'll have to ask Miss Rutter to go over your work. In fact, you need n't trouble yourself further about it. I'll have Miss Rutter draw up some plans that I'm sure will please Mrs. LeLeche much better."

Throwing it down on the desk with a hopeless air, Miss Snell prepared to move off.

"Excuse me, Miss Snell," began Betty, in a tense voice, her eyes blazing. "What do you see to criticise in this? I shall be glad to have definite criticism."

Miss Snell had never been pinned down to specific criticism and could not make it. Definite directions were impossible to her. She tore down in a vague way, but never built up.

"There's no need of your losing your temper," she said, with that assumption of superiority that is so irritating. "I see Miss Minturne in every line of this drawing. I don't agree at all with her ideas in decoration, and in time I shall make radical changes here. This place needs a revolution. I can't have my studio carried on in this way."

Betty drew herself up, and her face grew pale with indignation.



"Please remember, Miss Snell," she said quietly, "that this is *our* studio, not yours alone. However, I think it is a very good idea, as Mrs. LeLeche is such an important client, for you to have Miss Rutter draw up another plan; then we can submit both of them for her choice."

"Knowing Miss Rutter's ability as I do, I am confident that Mrs. LeLeche will not care to see any other plans than hers," Miss Snell replied, leaving hastily.

Betty sat down dazed, looking at the drawing over which she had spent so many hours of hard work. She felt that this was the best thing she had ever accomplished.

"She will run this business into the ground," she groaned. "Then where will be the money for the mortgage! Poor old daddy!"

Despair crept into her heart, none the less bitter because it was a girlish heart that had tucked away in it many happy adjusting resources. She decided not to say anything to her parents about this for the present, for they had been delighted over her unexpected good fortune, and perhaps something might turn up to bring things to rights.



She picked up the rejected plans and looked at them long and critically. Then, with a smile, she began to clean off the finger-marks made by Miss Snell. As she worked, her smile grew brighter.

“We ’ll wait until Mrs. LeLeche comes. She liked our rough sketch, and as she is the one who is paying for it, I rather think she ’ll have something to say about it.”



## XVIII

### LOIS'S ENGAGEMENT

“**E**NGAGED to Dunmore Lane! You, Lois Byrd!”

With a hesitating flourish of a handsome new ring, Lois had told Betty that she and Dunmore Lane were engaged to be married, the thing which of all Betty most feared.

“So it is settled!” said Betty, in a sinking voice.

She sat down, tense and expectant, near Lois. Lois was looking off into space. She nodded her head slowly.

“Yes. Dunny has heard from my father,” she said, smiling at Betty. Then she began to laugh. “What a woe-begone face!”

“Lois, I’m horribly, horribly jealous!”

“Oh, Betty, when I’m so happy!”

“Yes, I’m jealous, and a mean, narrow-minded, small-hearted friend — but oh, Lois!”

She ran over to her friend and, kneeling, threw her arms around her, hugging her tight.



"We'll never be the same again. Dunny's first now, and — oh, I can't stand it!" Between a laugh and a cry Betty scrambled to her feet. "I'll help plan your wedding finery, though!" Then she added with a kiss: "There's no one I'd rather — rather have for a brother-friend than Dunny Lane."

Lois smiled very sweetly. She was, even for her, unusually still and quiet, and to Betty this was the beginning of the parting of their ways. Never before had Lois remained so silent, so indisposed to "talk things over." Here was this intense happening, and she only sat there by the window with that serene smile and far-away expression in her beautiful brown eyes.

"Now, Betty, if you too were only —" she began.

Betty clapped her hands over her ears.

"No, I won't, Lois Byrd, have you recommend matrimony to me. It's worked enough havoc already in our once happy home. You engaged, betrothed, to Dunmore Lane! I can't realize it."

The girls laughed together, and the tense moment passed.



"Yes," added Betty, trying to steer away from the subject of Dunmore Lane until she could get a hold on herself, "when people are deep in anything, they are always trying to drag others in. You know Jennie Walcott is a vegetarian, and she's constantly holding forth on its weird beauties." Betty stopped abruptly. "But I suppose that is not exactly to the point."

"No, it's not," affirmed Lois, with feeling.

"Well, I'm beginning to feel much broader-minded now, so let's have a good time planning your wedding. Oh, Lois, how queer that does sound!"

Betty looked at Lois as if she expected to see in the gentle, high-bred face some strange transformation.

Lois smiled gayly. "Oh, I'm so happy, Betty. It can't make any difference between us. Why, I believe I love the whole world better because — of — this — and how much more I must love you, Betty, my comrade!"

At this Betty kissed Lois hurriedly and bolted to the door and ran down the hall to be with her mother.

"Mother," she cried, falling on her knees



and holding Mrs. Baird's hand in a tight grasp, "oh, mother, it's as if Lois were going to — to — die!"

She buried her head in her mother's lap.

"Nonsense, Betty. Lift up your head. There!" With both hands under Betty's chin, she raised the tear-stained face. "In a short while you will grow accustomed to the idea, and we shall all have a delightful time arranging Lois's wedding."

Betty brightened, and straightened up on her knees.

"We all love Dunny," continued her mother, "and we know he is an honorable and loving fellow. As Lois loves him, she will have a happy life with him. We have both said they were suited to one another."

"Oh, I have always said no one was half good enough for Lois," broke in Betty.

"We naturally feel no one is good enough for our splendid girl. In time we'll feel just as loving about Dunny, and rejoice that Lois has such a noble husband. We can be thankful, too, that they are to live in New York and that Dunmore is no idler, though he is so wealthy, and that he is ambitious to be



a first-class lawyer, like his father, Judge Lane."

"I am glad, mother. Indeed I am glad!" repeated Betty, as if the affirmation brought to the surface her real feelings about Lois's engagement, which had been hidden by the surface excitement and jealousy, though a desire for an exclusive love was not a part of Betty's make-up. "I don't want to be mean and not be happy when Lois is happy. But just think, mother, she is sitting up there, looking out of the window with that contented, peaceful smile, and thinking of — a boy!"

Betty did not try to keep the scorn out of her voice.

"Imagine me sitting by my window with a peaceful smile for Jack and Paul and Craig!" she finished.

Mrs. Baird laughed heartily. "You don't get the right idea. Leave out the 'ands' and put in 'ors.' It's easy to see you're heart-free, child. At least, if you can't understand the deep part, you can give Lois your interest and loyalty, and keep from showing your disappointment."

Mrs. Baird felt a lightening of her heart



when she heard Betty class Paul Waborne so carelessly with Jack and Craig. Oh, if she could only keep her little girl a while longer! Yet with the perfect happiness of her own married life before her mind, she knew she would have Betty married some day to a man she loved and honored.

Suddenly, with a shock, came the omission that had escaped her, — Mr. Minturne! But no! She refused to consider him. Why, they had known each other only — Then she saw that her reasoning was not trustworthy and would not lead her to the longed-for conclusion, and she stopped. Her mother's eyes had not been blinded to his evident admiration of her daughter.

Betty, with her arms folded in her mother's lap, was looking out towards the Sound, and Mrs. Baird smiled down at the fair head and pushed back tenderly the wayward curls that fell over her forehead.

In the happiness of their new-found relation Lois and Dunny's conversation naturally turned to Betty.

"Look at Paul, there," remarked Dunny. "The old sobersides is laying down the law



about something or other. He's been coming here pretty regularly since the May-day. I can't for the life of me imagine what Betty sees in him."

"Oh, Betty does n't care for him particularly," explained Lois. "But he attracts her in some ways. He's going to join the Brothers who are working among the mountaineers in Tennessee, and he likes to talk to Betty about it; and his loyalty to the cause appeals to the strong sense of loyalty in her own nature. But there is n't a trace of sentiment in it on either side, I'm perfectly sure of that."

"I'm mighty glad of it," said Dunny, heartily. "Jack's the boy for her."

Lois shook her head thoughtfully.

"I don't believe it's Jack," she answered slowly. "They are too much alike. And I don't think Betty herself is sure, just yet, though I have my own suspicions."

"Minturne?" asked Dunny, abruptly.

Lois only smiled at him teasingly, then sprang up and ran over to where Betty and Paul were talking.



## XIX

### THE GOODS AND THE PATTERN

LIFE had suddenly taken on a new aspect for Betty. Lois was engaged, Miss Minturne was married and far away; and with Miss Snell, Betty had daily opportunity to test her kinship with the one she had held up to Jack so casually in the spring, the man with the heart too large to remember a wrong.

Though Betty kept the fear to herself, she never went to the Studio without expecting to be told that at the end of the month her services would no longer be needed; for very few of the former Studio force remained.

It was just after dinner. Mrs. Baird, Betty, and Miss Jane were in the sewing-room; Lois sat apart, writing, the others suspected, to Dunny, before taking up her sewing; for every one was now busily hemming for the bridal chest.



"I do believe the whole trouble with Miss Snell is the lack of a sense of humor," said Betty, abruptly, chuckling to herself.

"What is it this time, Betty?" inquired Lois, lifting her head expectantly.

"Why, to-day I quoted one of our favorite things from 'Alice in Wonderland.' She asked where I got that. When I told her, she said disdainfully: 'I think that's a very silly book.'"

Betty and Lois shrieked with laughter.

"It's hard to hold a grudge against such a poor soul, isn't it, Betty?" laughed Lois, returning to her letter, in which she incorporated this last "Snellism," as she called it, for Dunny's enjoyment.

Miss Jane was watching Betty with keen eyes, and gave her plenty of good advice.

Miss Jane was one of those old-time seamstresses who sewed by the day. They were often original characters, full of oddities and curious points of view, yet with shrewd common sense and keen insight into human nature. In their wanderings from home to home, while drawing in and out the threads or snipping the material, they stored up many whole-



some aphorisms, rules of living deduced from the life around them. These they offered freely to their customers, often with a peculiar snappishness that seemed to become part of their nature through their occupation.

So with Miss Jane. She did not gossip, but her generalizations on the human family were frequent in Weston, and one familiar with the village could usually locate the source of her reflections.

She had watched over Betty, who had always been her pet, and who now, at nearly nineteen, seemed to the spinster hardly older than the pretty, dark-eyed, spirited child who used to recite "pieces" for the privilege of rummaging through her reticule for peppermint drops and bits of bright silk to make doll clothes with.

This evening Betty was helping her mother with a dress for proud little Edwyna, who had begged to have it "for Sunday." Only the swift scratching of Lois's pen broke the busy silence, until Miss Jane spoke up slowly:

"Now I think a body begins wantin' life jes' like fine stitch work," surveying, not with-



out complacency, the pearl-like stitches of her own needlework on Lois's fine damask.

"It often turns out pretty rough basting," supplemented Betty, with a desire to carry on the figure rather than from any feeling in the matter.

"Yes, I remember my dismay when I realized that things have a way of their own. And people have a way of their own too," laughed Mrs. Baird, as she laid down the paper pattern on the material for the little dress.

"Yes, that Miss Snail!" In this respect Miss Jane was like that poor King George, who showed his antipathies by continually miscalling the patronymics of those whom he disliked!

"So you think, Miss Jane, that it's wiser for Betty to fight it out than —"

"Run away?" concluded Betty, standing up and holding before Miss Jane's critical eye the sleeve she had finished.

Miss Jane did not reply at once to Mrs. Baird. Her mind was absorbed in her work. She turned the dainty sleeve round and round and held it off at arm's length to get the full effect. Then she answered antiphonally:



“An’ live to fight ’nother day.”

She always heard what you said, but took her own time to answer. Mrs. Baird, who was trying to make a remnant of material suit her pattern, raising her eyes from her work.

“There, thank goodness,” she said with a sigh of relief, “I have made it fit the pattern at last!”

“Of course it’s easy ’nough to lay your pattern on a big piece o’ goods, but even ’f you have only a remlet you can ’most always make it fit the pattern by twisting it this here way, then that there way,” observed Miss Jane. Then she pointed at the goods with her shears. “’Liz’beth, that there remlet’s Miss Smell. Make her fit your pattern. You can do it ’f you’ll go to work and try a bit.”

“Miss Snell!” Betty did not grasp the analogy.

“Yes, Miss Shell. My idee ’s this. You know a good bit about this here decoration business. She don’t. She’s dumm. You ain’t. But she has the say. Twist her ’round to fit your idees. You mind me, Betty; I ain’t sewed fer all Weston fer forty years already ’thout learnin’ that most goods can be made



to fit the pattern 'f it 's twisted 'bout 'nough. You twist her."

"Yes, Miss Jane, but how in the world can I twist Miss Snell around to my ideas?" queried Betty.

"Easy. Jes' learn her that your idee is money in her pocket. She may like her own way, but you see if she don't like money better."

Something in the stiff, lean old figure, sitting bolt upright, with the big square-rimmed spectacles pushed up on the forehead as Miss Jane looked meditatively at her sewing, made a lump come to Betty's throat, and running over to her, she threw her arms around her and kissed her faded hair. Then plumping herself down on the floor beside her, as she used to do in Weston, she snuggled close to the knees that had held a lapboard so many years that they had grown to look not unlike one.

"I'll try to be a good little pattern, Miss Jane," she said.

"That 's right, 'Liz'beth." Miss Jane patted the oval pink cheek, while Betty's face grew bright with the comradeship which she had always felt with Miss Jane.



"Mrs. Baird, Betty she looks good to-day, ain't?" she said cheerfully. The two women had discussed the paleness they had noticed in Betty's face lately.

"If Miss Snell would only say when a thing is right, it would be easier," said Betty to Lois, who now joined the group and was hemming one of her fine napkins.

"Don't you ever please her?" asked her mother, anxiously.

"Oh, I suppose I do, when she does n't find fault with my work."

"Well, ain't that all you need?" said Miss Jane, comfortably. "A body's expected to do right. Right's part of the bargain, so it ain't spoken of."

"At 'The Pines,'" spoke up Lois, "we thought a girl was mean when she did n't say something nice about our new duds, or when we did our part well at an entertainment. Only the mean-spirited girls, who watch you with cold little eyes and go around by themselves because they can't find an equal, kept quiet. It was in our code of honor to tell a girl that she had a laurel wreath on her head or some such nonsense. It showed that we



were n't envious and were proud of her. And it is n't so easy either, is it, Bet, to praise people? I had to swallow hard many a time before I got it out, when I did n't like the girl. Only those who never try think it's easy and call it flattery."

"Huh, life ain't no high-toned boardin'-school," sniffed Miss Jane. She turned to Mrs. Baird as one who had gone, like herself, to a sterner school.

"Now, Lois, we're snubbed!" cried Betty. "Let's bolt before my mother has time to answer."

Together they ran out and scurried down the steps, and the two women soon heard them in the drawing-room singing college songs, to Betty's piano accompaniment, Yale songs predominating in honor of Dunmore Lane.



## XX

### LAURENCE MINTURNE'S STORMY ROW

**T**OWARDS evening a sharp southwest wind sprang up, swaying the Virginia creeper back and forth, strewing the floor of the porch with its crimson leaves, and turning outward the silver-lined foliage of the quivering white poplars.

Snug in her rain-proof coat, Betty was standing at the top of the front steps, with one hand resting against the pillar, watching the approach of the equinoctial storm promised by the heavy clouds, and the rising waves on the bay.

“That looks like a skiff out there, with some one in it. He’s having a hard pull,” she thought anxiously, and stepped farther out.

A vivid flash of lightning made her close her eyes for a second, then, while the thunder was pealing, she ran down to the gate to get a better view of the boat and its solitary occu-



pant, who was pulling vigorously against the beating waves.

Mrs. Baird, who was closing the windows, saw her and called to her to come in out of the storm.

"There's a boat in trouble out there," Betty cried, above the storm, and before her mother could answer she sped across the road to the shore. The oarsman seemed to be trying to row towards their wharf, to effect a landing, but the force of the wind and the waves had now become such that he had to give his whole attention to his oars and could not make sure of his course. Betty saw that he was having a hard struggle. Involuntarily she started towards her own skiff, but realized at once that it could not live in such a sea, even if she had had the strength to handle it. Again she looked at the oarsman.

"It's Mr. Minturne!" she exclaimed. Then she cried through her hands: "Oh, Mr. Minturne! Laurence! To the right! Farther to the right!"

Her voice, carried by the rushing wind, evidently reached him, for he turned his boat at once in that direction, and his strokes



seemed to have double power. His boat shot up over the waves and dipped down into the trough at an alarming rate, but he held his direction steadily, and in a few minutes was out of the worst of the rough water and about to come under the lee of the hill. Thinking himself safe, he swung his boat around, waved a hand to Betty, and called out: "Thank you, Miss Baird! I could n't —"

Just then an extra heavy puff caught his boat squarely on the side and completely capsized her, tossing Minturne into the water. Being a strong swimmer, however, he soon landed near Betty, and came out looking for all the world like a drowned rat, but without his coolness or his courteous manner being disturbed in the slightest.

Laughing heartily, he pulled off his dripping hat and bowed profoundly.

"Really, Miss Baird," he said, "I must apologize most humbly for my old friend, Neptune, though his intentions were evidently of the best. He wished to cast me at your very feet, but timed it badly."

Betty joined in his laugh, but broke off suddenly.



"Oh, Mr. Minturne, you must run up to the house as fast as you can and get some dry clothes on. Your boat will blow ashore somewhere in the harbor and we can find it after the storm is over. Come on, I'll race you up to the house."

Suiting the action to the word, Betty turned and flew towards the house, and with his wet clothes Minturne found it no easy task to keep pace with her. As they reached the steps, Doctor Baird, who had seen the last act of the incident from his study window, came out to meet them and took charge of Mr. Minturne.

Betty met Lois in the hall.

"Lois, come right upstairs with me," she said in a low voice, her manner tense.

Together they ran up the stairs to Betty's room.

"Oh, Lois, I did such an awful, awful thing!" cried Betty, throwing herself down on the window-seat and burying her crimson cheeks in a pillow. "I can never look him in the face again!"

"Whom can't you look in the face again?" asked Lois, lightly.



"Mr. Minturne. Oh, Lois, I called him — I screamed it out at the top of my voice — I just know he heard me — I —"

"What, Bet? What did you call him? What did you scream out?"

"Lois, I called him 'Laurence'! Yes, 'Laurence'!"

"Oh, Betty Baird, you did n't! What a joke!" cried Lois, who saw at once the light in which it appeared to Betty and might to Minturne.

Again Betty buried her burning face in the friendly pillow.

"Yes, I did! What will he think?" she asked in a muffled tone. Then she looked up at Lois helplessly.

Lois leaned back in her chair and fairly shrieked with laughter.

"I can't understand how you came to do it," she said. "We never call him by his Christian name, as we do some people behind their backs. He's so dignified. How could you do it!"

Betty sprang to her feet and moved restlessly around the room.

"Well, I managed to do it!" she answered



with self-directed irony. "Now I'll have to snub him."

Lois smiled quizzically into her woe-begone face.

"Betty?"

"Yes? Well, Lois, are you going to help me out of this pickle?"

"Betty, did you call him 'Laurence' because —"

"Now you stop!" cried Betty, clapping her hand over Lois's mouth. Then she added: "Oh, of course it was because Miss Minturne always calls him — Laurence. That was what you were going to say, was n't it?"

Lois laughed at Betty's subterfuge and shook her head.

"I won't say what my 'because' was going to be, but I think you know that I know."

Betty walked to the door.

"Well, we must go down now and be ready to meet him. It will be all right in the morning! I just hope that the storm kept him from hearing. Anyway, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it was better than the 'snob.' Lois, dear, don't you think the storm drowned my voice?"





THE GROUP GREETED MINTURNE WITH LAUGHTER, AS  
HE CAME SLOWLY DOWN THE STAIRS — *Page 219*







"Oh, there is hardly a doubt of that," comforted Lois. "Anyway, I don't think he'd mind!" she added significantly.

"Oh, Lois, you make it all the harder to go down. Well, I'll act as if nothing had happened. I'll make him doubt his own ears!"

"You can do it, Betty," laughed Lois, adding to herself: "But I have great faith in people hearing what they were not intended to hear!"

On coming out of Doctor Baird's room, Minturne halted a minute at the broad landing and took in the lively home scene in the great hall below him. A cheerful fire crackled in the big fireplace. Before it a huge sofa had been drawn up cosily, where Betty sat toasting her feet after her dash in the storm. Lois was lighting the candles in the tall Sheffield candlesticks, while Edwynna sat in a cavernous armchair, crooning a lullaby to her doll Minerva.

The group greeted Minturne with laughter, as he came slowly down the stairs in Doctor Baird's clothes. Both men were six feet tall, but Minturne's breadth of shoulders and depth of chest made it necessary for him to put



on the Doctor's voluminous quilted dressing-jacket, a Chinese creation that had been presented to him by a member of his congregation when he left Weston.

Betty jumped up instantly and insisted on his taking the warmest corner of the sofa.

"Now," she laughed, when he declined to sit down, "you may as well make up your mind at once to be coddled. Our cook is making hot lemonade for you, my mother is going through her medicine chest, and Miss Jane is upstairs looking for a stick of licorice-root. Lois and I are to keep you prisoner here by the fire, and Edwynna will bring your dinner to you."

"I am sure you will find me a very docile prisoner," said Minturne, laughingly submitting to Betty's regimen.

The door opened, and Katie appeared, with a great look of importance on her broad, beaming face, bearing a big Canton bowl filled with steaming lemonade, which she ladled out impartially to Betty and Minturne.

"Oh, Katie, are n't you going to give me some too?" protested Lois, who had just come in from lighting the lamps.



"Sure I is, honey. You jess wait til I get some more ob dem cups."

"I'll get them, Katie," cried Edwyna, hurrying after the old cook.

Sitting around the fire, they were all sipping their lemonade when Miss Jane came briskly down the steps. Rummaging in her reticule, she drew out a long stick of licorice-root.

"Now you jes' go to work and suck this here lic'rish-root," she said, bending over Minturne solicitously, for Miss Jane was as good a nurse as she was a seamstress.

A dubious look came into his eyes, but vanished at once as he took the root.

"Oh, thank you, Miss Hufnagel. I have n't had a piece of this since I was a boy. I am familiar with its remedial qualities. I'll save it till later, as I've just been drinking lemonade," he replied, slipping it skilfully but determinedly into the pocket of the dressing-jacket.

Betty and Lois, who were standing by with their arms around each other, could hardly keep their faces straight. Miss Jane went absent-mindedly up the stairs, returning in a minute with a handful of hoarhound drops.



"I heard you coughin', ain't, Mr. Minturne? Now you jes' suck them hoarhound drops. Them 's better 'n anything else fer a cough."

"Oh, Miss Jane, I'm afraid he'll spoil his appetite for dinner," expostulated Betty.

"Well, it 's good to have 'em handy," replied Miss Jane, as she saw Minturne put them into the pocket with the licorice-root. "Now I'll go and see if I can help your Ma about supper."

Almost immediately Katie announced that dinner was served, and soon they were all seated around what seemed to Minturne one of the pleasantest dinner tables it had ever been his good fortune to sit down to.

In the evening, the storm having passed over, Jack and Dunny appeared. Minturne was still the heroic invalid of the occasion, for Miss Jane firmly believed that such a dripping would certainly be followed by serious sickness unless her remedies were applied constantly. Betty took advantage of this coddling. With eyes twinkling, she turned to Miss Jane.

"Miss Jane, I am very much afraid that Mr. Minturne will have a bad attack of sore throat



from this exposure." She knew Miss Jane's one and infallible remedy.

"That 's so, 'Liz'beth. A strip o' red flannel 'round his neck 'll prevent that."

Mr. Minturne demurred vigorously, though with his usual courtesy, giving Betty a look that begged for mercy.

"A ounce o' prevention, young man, is worth a pound o' cure, ain't, Betty?" insisted Miss Jane, crisply.

"I advise you to put it on, Mr. Minturne," said Betty, with a mischievous smile.

A pleasant thought seemed to decide Minturne, and he replied:

"I shall be delighted to wear it, Miss Jane."

When Miss Jane appeared with the long strip of red flannel in her hand Minturne stepped forward with the air of a courtier and took it.

"Now, Miss Betty," he said, with a triumphant twinkle in his eye, though his manner was perfectly grave, "of course you will put this round my neck, since you are so familiar with its use."

Nonplussed, Betty involuntarily stepped back.



"Come, Betty, don't back out that way," said Jack, laughing at the point Minturne had scored.

"Just imagine you're pinning your favor on your knight's arm," suggested Lois, teasingly.

"You know it must be soaked in kerosene first, must n't it, Miss Jane?" said Betty, hurriedly, blushing at Lois's words, and seeking a way out of the predicament.

"Oh, if that's the case," said Minturne, smiling, "I'll put this in my pocket, as I really don't want to be driven out of this charming assembly." The red flannel rag went to keep company with the licorice-root and the hoarhound drops.

To Betty's relief, Edwynna appeared with a basket, almost as big as herself, filled with golden pippins, which she distributed to the party. All at once began to tell their fortunes with the seeds, and the merry chatter continued until Jack sat down at the piano and began to pound out, in a manner truly masculine, the strains of a popular waltz. In a minute the chairs were pushed back and the others were swinging round the room. By



and by the piano stopped suddenly, and Jack called out:

"Now, Minturne, it's your turn to grind out some music."

Minturne quickly took his place and, with much skill, played a number of two-steps and waltzes. Then, on his part, he stopped as abruptly as Jack had done, saying:

"Now I must have a dance with Miss Byrd. Lane, it's your turn to be the orchestra."

"Thank heaven, I can't play a note," replied Dunny. "Jack 'll play some more. You may have Lois. I 'll take a turn with Betty."

Minturne went up to Lois, who, warm and breathless, was fanning herself vigorously, but was quite ready for another dance. Dunny resigned her to his care, and he and Betty stepped out as Jack struck up a spirited waltz.

"I say, I'm getting more than my share of this. There is n't much fun in it for me," Jack cried, after a time, wheeling round and facing the dancers.

They all strolled back to the fire in the hall, and clustered round it, regaling themselves with apples and freshly baked gingersnaps which old Katie had smuggled in while they



were dancing. Doctor Baird had gone to his study, and Mrs. Baird and Miss Jane, who had disappeared early in the evening to oversee some household affairs, now came in and joined the group.

Miss Jane said she felt chilly after being in the hot kitchen, and Betty offered to go upstairs for her white knitted shawl to throw over her shoulders. Taking up the silver candlestick that stood on the hall table, she held it out for Jack to light, then tripped lightly up the low steps. At the landing she turned and paused a moment, looking down, the flickering candle lighting up her face, throwing the smiling eyes into thoughtful shadows and burnishing the loose golden hair. Her slim figure, in its white flannel gown, stood out girlish and spirited against the shadows on the green wall behind.

Mrs. Baird's glance had followed Betty, and when she turned away, it casually met Minturne's. The look in his frank blue eyes made her draw a quick breath. But it was all over in a moment, and she could only hope that she had imagined the depth of their expression.



## XXI

### MRS. LELECHE HAS HER SAY

SEVERAL days later, Mrs. LeLeche came from her country-place to look over the plans for her city house that Miss Minturne and Betty had sketched out a month or so earlier. She was anxious to have the work done before winter, and had consulted Miss Minturne about the color scheme and furnishings; but the completed plan had just been finished by Betty the day that Miss Snell determined to assert her undivided authority by detailing the work to Miss Rutter.

Miss Snell, though autocratic and domineering, had a bully's instinct to toady those who were superior in strength of any kind. She bowed especially to wealth, and that Mrs. LeLeche not only had in abundance, but those rare concomitants, refinement and good taste.



Mrs. LeLeche, too, liked her own way, and she usually gained it by her suavity and tact, to say nothing of her money. To-day she met Miss Snell pleasantly and began to congratulate her on succeeding Mrs. Anstice. It was such a privilege, she said, to have a gentlewoman like Miss Minturne to suggest and help in one's decorative difficulties.

As Mrs. LeLeche's smile and manner indicated that she believed the gentle "privilege" had been transferred to Miss Minturne's successor, Miss Snell could smile and nod most affably, even while she felt cold towards the praise of her still dominant predecessor.

After the civilities of the introduction had been gracefully and sufficiently prolonged, Mrs. LeLeche inquired for Miss Minturne's sketch of her ideas for the house.

"I am very sorry, Mrs. LeLeche, but my assistant has not quite completed the plans. You'll be delighted with Miss Rutter, I'm sure. She's so *recherché*, so artistic, so —"

"Pardon me," interrupted Mrs. LeLeche, not at all interested in a catalogue of Miss Rutter's gifts, but greatly so in having her house ready by a certain date, "I saw a rough



copy of our ideas, and I understood that they would be finished yesterday." Her tone and manner clearly showed displeasure.

"I am so sorry, but you know, coming into a large establishment like this, it takes time —" began Miss Snell, placatingly.

"Of course," again interrupted Mrs. LeLeche, looking at the clock, "but I can't wait to-day. I'll be satisfied with another look at the sketch Miss Minturne made out. She had a young friend with her who comprehended our ideas perfectly. Has she gone?"

Miss Snell involuntarily stiffened up.

"Miss Baird?"

"Yes, Miss Baird. A charming girl! — and very bright."

Miss Snell hesitated, but Mrs. LeLeche's second impatient look at the clock, and the vision of the large check she would receive for the work, decided her, and she hurried off for Betty and her plan.

Betty quickly followed Miss Snell to the reception-room. Mrs. LeLeche greeted her with marked warmth, inquiring after Miss Minturne affectionately. Then she took the plans and studied them attentively, asking many



questions, which Betty answered succinctly and in a way that evidently pleased Mrs. LeLeche. She had some minor changes to suggest, but in general the plans evidently had her entire approval. She turned to Miss Snell.

"My house has been delayed somewhat, and I can't say just now when you can begin the decorating, but I shall let you know at the earliest moment, and I hope you will hasten the work as much as possible."

She moved towards the door, but Miss Snell reached out and almost took hold of her arm in her eagerness to detain her.

"Please excuse me, Mrs. LeLeche, but could you wait just a minute? My assistant, Miss Rutter, has made a sketch which she would be glad of an opportunity to submit to you. You will like it, I am sure, perhaps better —"

Miss Snell stopped, not knowing exactly how far she might go.

Mrs. LeLeche looked at her in surprise, but being a reader of human nature, she at once divined Miss Snell's motive. She was not an organizer of charities and a social leader without having gained an insight into the cause that now made Miss Snell's face so red. She



glanced at Betty, too, and thought she read in her eyes an eagerness for the very comparison of plans which Miss Snell urged.

Betty, in fact, was longing for just this experiment. Confidence in the thoroughness of the training she had received, first with Miss Greene, then with Miss Minturne, gave her assurance of the outcome. Moreover, as she told Lois, she "felt it in her bones" that if she could once show Miss Snell that her work was of money value to her, as Miss Jane had suggested, Miss Snell was anxious enough to build up her business to hide her jealousy of Miss Minturne and her dislike for Betty herself.

Mrs. LeLeche turned to Miss Snell.

"I shall be very glad to see a better set of plans if you have them. Please ask Miss Rutter to bring them."

Miss Rutter came in at once and fluently explained her plans, and Mrs. LeLeche listened courteously. Then she bowed to Miss Snell.

"I thank you, Miss Snell. A comparison is often excellent for throwing light on a subject, though I had, through our friend, Miss Min-



turne" — she glanced brightly at Betty, — "sufficient to guide me. But now, Miss Baird, I am convinced that you know exactly what I want, and I shall write to you about beginning the work at the first opportunity. Thank you again, Miss Snell, for your efforts, but please go to no further trouble. Miss Baird understands perfectly, and I shall want her to have immediate charge of the work."

She bowed again to Miss Snell, shook hands cordially with Betty, and walked out quickly.

That evening Betty dragged Lois off to the little bridge over the mill-pond flood gate, and sitting on the big log that ran as a string piece along one side, she reviewed the day.

"I tell you, Lois, I felt like Fortune carrying her cornucopia when I left the room with my rolled-up sketch. Accepted! I could see Peace and Prosperity coming to the worthy Baird family! I thought that I could just shake that cornucopia a little, and the mortgage money, new house paint, winter clothes, etc., etc., would roll comfortably out on the floor. And oh, Lois, I did want to run to Miss Minturne and hug her and thank her!"

Betty's voice trembled, and she hastily



dabbed her handkerchief to her wet, smiling eyes.

"She 'll soon be back. A year passes very quickly," comforted Lois.

Betty started up.

"Why, the idea of my complaining because it's all so different now! I ought to be thankful, and I am, for that beautiful year with Miss Minturne."

"Her letters are awfully happy, are n't they? Her last one just rang with joy."

"Yes. I do hope, though, when our time comes, we won't have all the trouble she had."

"When our time comes!' Betty, you're so funny! Often I can't tell whether you are talking about love or death."

"Well, I can't complain about the same indefiniteness in your language, Miss Lois Byrd!"

Lois blushed self-consciously but happily. "And if I'm not blind, Lady Betty, your language will not long remain—" Then she reverted to the old subject.

"I suppose, Betty, now that you have come out on top, you will stay on with Miss Snell."

"Yes, of course. I don't believe she would



give me up now. And I can't, for the life of me, dislike her heartily, for somehow I understand why she is as she is. It must have been hard for her to know that every one around was mentally comparing her with Miss Minturne, to her disadvantage," added Betty, justly.

"You know that dear Mother Baird said that when you attacked a fault like resentment, you would stir up a hornet's nest. It does seem as if this trouble with Miss Snell came as a kind of test. You don't seem nearly so cross with her as you did with poor old Mr. Webbie."

Betty clapped her hands.

"Oh, good! Do you really think so? I hope I am not. Maybe I am going to have a Golden Year. You dear thing, you have n't any uglinesses to overcome. Lucky Dunny Lane!"



## XXII

### THE CITY HISTORY CLUB VISITS NEW YORK

EDWYNA'S shrewd prophecy that "Mr. Brooks would take them to New York in his automobile" was quickly fulfilled.

"I am going to take those budding historiographers of yours to New York on Christmas Eve on a spree," began Jack, who had met Betty and her father at the station and was taking them home in his car.

They were rolling along slowly and gently, and Jack emphasized his determination by honking terrifically at an inoffensive dog that had strayed into the road.

"A spree! My serious City History Club!"

"Well, then, call it a pilgrimage," Jack compromised, when he found himself master of a long stretch where he "let her out a few notches," as he said, and Betty had to grab hastily at her hat.



"I'll take them over to New York and show them all the history that's good for youngsters of their tender years. My mother will go, and we'll have a bully luncheon at a terribly historical house I know of, for of course you history sharps would n't eat in any other kind of a place."

"Oh, that's just the thing! How kind you are, Jack!" cried Betty, above the whistling of the wind in their ears. "But do take us to the places on our list, for Craig has made out a perfect itinerary for us."

"Dunny 'll have to run an annex with his car. I can't carry more than ten in mine, and they 'll be rather snug at that."

"As long as we don't crowd your mother, the more the merrier. I do wish we could take at least one poor child who does n't have 'sprees' at Christmas time. Why not John's Lydia and Dorcas?"

"That 'd be jolly. That Lydia's a brick. I know from that red crop of hers."

"I'm afraid to tell Edwyna that we're going. She won't sleep a wink to-night, for she's Corresponding Secretary of the Club and she'll have to send out all the notices."



"Will she worry about it?" asked Jack, solicitously, for he was really very fond of Edwyna, who, in turn, adored him.

"Worry about it? Gracious, no! She'll be too puffed up with pride to sleep. She'll lie awake composing them."

The next day Edwyna held supreme occupancy in the book-room. Her small glossy black head, bent resolutely over a sheet of notepaper, was turned at frequent intervals to a small book which lay open before her. Its title was "The Gentleman and Lady's Book of Politeness and Propriety of Deportment." It once held a prominent place in Betty's grandmother's bookcase, but Edwyna was blissfully unconscious of its antiquity; with such a well of courtesy to draw from she felt fully equal to the requirements of her lofty position as the Corresponding Secretary of the City History Club.

At first Betty had thought of writing out an invitation to the Christmas Eve automobile party for her to copy, but she and Lois had decided that as Edwyna had schemed for the office it would be as well to allow her to have some of its burdens, for so far it had been a sinecure.



Her first note was to Christine, her favorite. Christine was three years older than herself, but Edwyna could n't see why she should n't be paired off with her, instead of always with that little Dottie, who was three years younger. In a postscript, she asked Christine to be sure to save her a seat beside her in the car.

Edwyna had felt no uneasiness over her responsibility. She knew how to write an excellent note, but now she wished to excel all past triumphs. Hence her draughts on "The Book of Politeness." Meditatively she chewed the end of her penholder.

"If I had n't stood up for my rights, they'd never have had a Corresponding Secretary," she said to herself. "Now I'll show 'em what they 'd have missed."

When Betty reached home, she was met at the door by Edwyna, whose face was flushed and preoccupied. She pulled Betty at once into the book-room. She was holding the old book, with a forefinger stuck in it to mark a place.

"I've been writing the notices." She pointed proudly with the book towards the snowy heap on the desk. "I've written to



every single member of the Club. But I'm not sure where to date Dottie's letter. She's so young."

Betty looked puzzled.

"Just as you did the others —"

"Oh, no!" Edwyna exclaimed, opening the book and holding it before Betty, with her finger marking the passage. "It says: 'The date of a letter may be at the beginning when we write to an equal; but in writing to a superior, it should be at the end.' All my dates are at the beginning, Cousin Betty, but Dottie's younger than I am, and she can't read or write, and I don't know where to date her letter."

Betty could n't keep her face straight any longer and burst out laughing.

"Oh, Edwyna, what would I do without you!" she cried, throwing her arms round the important little figure.

"I don't see anything to laugh about," pouted Edwyna, who felt pretty sure that Betty was laughing at her. Still intent on her work, she drew out of Betty's arms.

"I'm laughing because you're the joy of my life!"



Edwyna looked darkly and critically at the old book of politeness, but would not deign to question Betty further. After Betty left the room she sat curled up in the big chair and pondered over it deeply.

"I don't know why Cousin Betty laughed, but I won't put any date on Dottie's letter," was her conclusion.

The notices were duly sent out and the Club met at the appointed hour. Not a member was absent, and John's girls ran through the gate long before any one was ready.

Jack and Dunmore came up in their cars in high feather, as though they were going to a game between their rival 'varsity football teams.

Craig brought his little sister over; his was the only studious face in that merry, moving group. He carried a threateningly large roll of paper, and his list of historical places in New York surprised even Mrs. Brooks, Daughter of the Revolution though she was, to say nothing of being a Colonial Dame.

Betty remonstrated a little on its erudite contents.



"But this is the chance of a lifetime for most of these children," he protested earnestly.

"I know, Craig, but these sweet infants are n't working for a degree in history, as you are. Besides, as Sir Walter says — "

"Ah, Dunny, now you will hear the true inwardness of this abstruse problem. To study history, or not to study it, that's the question," interrupted Jack.

"Hear! hear!" applauded Dunny.

"I am perfectly delighted to see such enthusiasm over one of the greatest of men," and Betty turned with much manner to the cheering boys.

"Stung!" hissed Jack.

"As I was about to remark," resumed Betty, turning her back on them and addressing herself to Craig, "he says he does n't so much approve of tasks and set hours for serious reading as of the plan of endeavoring to give a taste for history to the youths themselves." Betty waved airily towards Jack and Dunny.

"Stung again!" they exclaimed in a breath, beating their chests tragically.

"That's all very well, but these youngsters



ought n't to miss this rare chance to learn something," grumbled Craig, for to learn was the aim of his life.

The children tumbled headlong into the two great cars in a gale of merriment and chattering. Mrs. Brooks's presence did not awe them into silence, for she entered wholly into their larkish little journey.

For the first few miles every passer-by smiled on them as though in benediction. Heads were turned to look after them, and very often peals of laughter seemed to follow. Before long Jack, instead of giving back his usually friendly smile, began to frown down on the pedestrians, who looked up at them so cheerily then followed them with mocking laughter, as it appeared. The Brooks had not, as a rule, found their big machine the cause of any but speculative or perhaps anxious looks as they drove through the village.

"We seem to be furnishing the public with a good deal of fun, some way or other," he said to Betty, as two men stopped abruptly and, on looking after them, hooted loudly.

"People are naturally benevolent, Jack,



and love to see children having a good time."

"We're all laughing, and it's contagious," said Mrs. Brooks, looking round on the bright young faces.

"It's mighty curious," said Jack, as a group of boys pointed after them and jeered as they flew by.

After another mile or two Jack brought his car to a standstill.

"I'll bet a cent that that kid brother of mine has been putting up something on us. He wanted to come along and I would n't let him," he said, as he jumped down and walked around the car, examining it carefully.

"Confound that little rascal!" they heard him exclaim vigorously under his breath.

"What is it, Jack?" his mother called out anxiously.

"Look at this, will you?" He came around the car, holding up a huge white placard, on which was printed in big inky letters:

SEEING NEW YORK!

50 c.

JACK BROOKS, CHAUFFEUR.



"That's why your dear benevolent people laughed at your children who were having such a good time!" said Jack, upbraiding Betty laughingly, throwing the torn pieces of card into the road.

Once started, the Club could not stop laughing. They kept nudging each other, and one could not look into another's eyes without causing them all to break into a series of giggles. Then Edwyna would poke her finger at Jack's back, and off they would all go again.

It was a happy party. The dry, crisp air whipped the color into their cheeks, and their eyes danced and sparkled as farmhouses, telegraph poles, wayside inns, and railroad stations flew by in bewildering succession. No one who looked at them could doubt that it was Christmas Eve.

At the ferry in Long Island City they stopped to wait for Dunny to come up with the remainder of the Club and Miss Jane. They were engrossed with the frantic efforts of two great draught horses to pull a heavily loaded truck out of a rut, when they were recalled by hearing their names.



“Oh, Edwyna! Christine! Marybelle! Phyllis!”

Turning, they saw Dunny's car bearing down on them. Miss Jane was sitting proudly erect beside Dunny, while the remainder of the Club members were standing up and waving hats, muffs, and handkerchiefs.

Jack's young passengers sprang to their feet and waved frantically in response, while Edwyna screamed:

“Oh, we beat you, we beat you! We got here long ago!”

The car glided up beside their own, and while they stood there waiting for the boat to come in, the two parties of girls chattered, all at once and all at the top of their voices, about the exciting incidents of their ride. Their elders talked more quietly, perhaps, but not less happily.

“My, but these here kerriges cert'n'y goes!” said Miss Jane to Mrs. Brooks, in a burst of enthusiasm that made Betty and Lois look at each other in wonder. “An' w'ile we was scootin' along there so fast it a'most took the hair off my head, I do declare it did n't make no more noise 'n my old Singer sewin' machine!”



After crossing the ferry, the party drove to the home of Margaret Weldon, Phyllis's cousin. She had spent the preceding summer in Hobart, and had helped the Club in their historical studies. The tall, bright-faced girl was standing at one of the long windows of the brown stone house, with hat and coat on, and evidently waiting impatiently for the girls. As soon as the cars swung up to the curb, she flew out of the door and sprang into Jack's car, amid the greetings of the party.

"Where away first, Craig?" called Jack.

"To St. Mark's Church, Tenth Street and Second Avenue," answered Craig. "We'll go there and have a look at old Peter Stuyvesant's grave. Then from there we'll work downwards, finishing at the Battery. Of course we can see very few places in part of one day, and these I have noted, with our luncheon, will take about all the time we have before the Children's Festival Service at Old Trinity. So start us off."

Quickly they rolled down-town, until they reached St. Mark's, where the children read, with much curiosity, the tablet which related that



“In this vault lies buried  
Petrus Stuyvesant,  
Late Captain-general and Governor in Chief  
of Amsterdam in New Netherland  
now called New York  
and the Dutch West India Islands. Died in A.D. 1671/2  
Aged 80 years.”

From there the Club ran over to see the New York Society Library, said to be the oldest library in America. It was chartered by George III in 1772.

“New York city is a city of changes,” said Craig, “but this library never changes — unless it has to. It has been in this building for fifty years, and you will, I think, find it very quaint and interesting.”

“Why is it called a Society Library, Mr. Ellsworth?” asked Edwyna. “Is it only for society people?”

“It sounds that way, does n’t it? But when it was started, ‘Society’ meant only an organized company. Yet for many years it was really one of the social centres of the city. The fine old gentlemen of a generation or two ago used to meet here regularly to discuss the topics of the day. And I believe the ladies, too, met here frequently for social intercourse,



and even, it is said — let me whisper it — for gossip!”

Laughing at Craig's simulated horror, they passed into the staid old building. When they came out, some minutes later, the little girls raced down the steps and piled into the cars, with cries for the next stopping place.

This proved to be City Hall Park, where they drew up in front of the statue of Nathan Hale, and Craig told them briefly the story of that martyr. Then springing out of the cars, they walked sedately up to the City Hall, where he drew their attention to a tablet, which they read with awe, uniting, as it did, the name of Gen. George Washington with The Declaration of Independence.

“Near this spot in the presence of  
Gen. George Washington  
The Declaration of  
Independence  
was read and published  
to the  
American Army  
July 9th, 1776.”

Across the street, on one of the walls of the post-office building, they found another tablet,



which told of the liberty pole that stood near that spot from 1766 to 1776. This pole was the cause of frequent conflicts between the Tories and the Sons of Liberty, and in defence of it the first martyr blood of the Revolution was shed in what was called the battle of Golden Hill.

The next stop in the excursion was at Bowling Green. Here Craig explained its use for the village sports in the early days, and told them that the iron railing surrounding it was set up in 1771.

"Those posts have had their heads knocked off," commented Marybelle.

"I imagine you don't know that you're speaking the exact truth," laughed Craig, "for those posts had heads. The fence was brought here from England, and the heads represented the members of the royal family. They were knocked off by the patriots during the Revolution, and the lead statue of King George III, which stood within the enclosure, was broken up and used to make bullets for our army. But it's getting rather late," he continued, "and I think we'd better go to one place more, Fraunces's Tavern, then have our



luncheon. After that we 'll go to St. Paul's and then we 'll have time to look around at Old Trinity before the children's service begins."

They spent some minutes examining the celebrated Fraunces's Tavern, which Washington made his headquarters in 1776 and where he delivered his farewell address to his generals in 1783, then went for their luncheon.

"Ho for St. Paul's!" cried Craig, when they had finished.

"Now you 'll see the Prince of Wales's feathers on the old pulpit," said Betty to Phyllis.

"Oh!" exclaimed several of the girls, "do you think they will let us sit in Washington's pew?"

"We 'll try it, anyhow," smiled Mrs. Brooks. "If they charge us, we can do as General Washington did when confronted by an overwhelming force, — beat a masterly retreat. But who could resist such sweet things as you children!"

Not daring to whisper, hardly daring to breathe, the girls tiptoed into what Craig had told them was "the only surviving ecclesiastical relic of the colonial era in the city," and



sat reverently in Washington's pew. To their delight no one disturbed them, and some of them closed their eyes and tried to imagine the grave, dignified figure of the Father of their country at their side. Then they examined attentively the monument to General Montgomery, who, they had learned, fell before Quebec, in 1775, crying to his troops: "Men of New York, you will not fail to follow where your general leads!"

From St. Paul's they went down Broadway to Old Trinity. As they entered the churchyard, Craig stopped them for a moment and called their attention to Wall Street, explaining that it took its name from a wall that had once been there to protect the little village from the Indians. Then turning to the church, he continued:

"Trinity Parish is very old and has had a great influence on the history of the city. Rector Street is named after its rectors, Vesey Street after its first rector, Barclay after the second, while Varick, Clarkson, Desbrosses, Morris, Ludlow, Duane, and Harrison streets, and others, were named after wardens and vestrymen."



"Are n't those sycamores beautiful!" exclaimed Betty as they walked through the churchyard. "And all of it is so picturesque!"

Craig pointed out some of the quaint and curious epitaphs, as well as the graves of William Bradford, the first printer in the colony; Alexander Hamilton, soldier, statesman, and patriot; and of Captain James Lawrence, commander of the frigate "Chesapeake," who was killed in the battle with the British frigate "Shannon."

"He's the one who cried 'Don't give up the ship!' when he was dying," whispered Christine to Phyllis.

Phyllis nodded her head and gazed with deepening awe at the tomb of the hero.

The great organ was thundering with all its power when the Club filed in and took seats on the side aisle, well towards the front. The church was in its Christmas mood, the pillars enwreathed in greens, while the candles on the altar gleamed mysteriously through the gathering twilight.

Presently the organ gave forth the tune of the processional hymn, and the procession appeared. In the lead came the verger, bearing



his staff, according to the quaint old English custom. Behind him were two trumpeters, leading the vested choir and the Sunday-school in singing "Once in Royal David's City."

The Club members joined heartily in all of the service, but especially in the carol, that seemed to be the favorite with the Sunday-school:

"The snow lay on the ground,  
The stars shone bright,  
When Christ our Lord was born  
On Christmas night.  
When Christ our Lord was born  
On Christmas night.  
Venite adoremus, Dominum.  
Venite adoremus, Dominum.  
Venite adoremus, Dominum."

The beautiful festival closed with the recessional, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and then the Club members followed the Sunday-school in the Visit to the Manger, a realistic representation of the birthplace of the Saviour at the front of the church.



## XXIII

### CHRISTMAS EVE

**J**ACK and Dunny "hit 'er up" just a little on the way back to Hobart, and they arrived in plenty of time to dress for dinner.

"Let us have a quiet, old-time sort of an Eve," Betty proposed, as she and Lois were trying to answer each other's question as to "what we shall do this evening."

"I think there is more sweetness in Christmas Eve than any other part of the year," Lois said thoughtfully; adding, "and joy, too, only the deep, quiet kind."

"To have our friends around us is enough," Betty replied, while trying to keep out of her voice the sadness she felt at the thought that this would be the last Christmas of the old kind, the kind they had spent together for five years, — not a short period to them out



of their eighteen or nineteen. Next year Lois would be married!

The great beautiful hall would inspire Christmas festivities, with its Revolutionary panelled wainscot, white-painted, the tall candles in the heavy brass sconces above the deep moulding lighting the few stately pictures, festooned with holly and mistletoe.

By the broad hearth, where John had piled logs of resinous pine and fragrant hickory, stood mimic pines in squat terra-cotta bowls. A gate-table was drawn cosily up by the deep old sofa before the fire, reflecting on its polished surface its load of apples, oranges, grapes, nuts, cakes, and candies.

“Oh, Lois, do please stand still a moment!” cried Betty, as Lois was coming slowly down the broad steps and looking around at the charming picture the hall presented. “You have stepped right out of a Sir Joshua Reynolds! Your dark hair with that red rose, those gold buckles on your slippers, your eyes shining like stars, and that perfect soft shimmering Worthy trailing gown, just like a pale rose itself! Mother, isn’t she the prettiest thing!”



"Indeed she is!" agreed Mrs. Baird, as she drew Betty to her side and smiled lovingly at her "other daughter," as she called Lois.

"'Purty is as purty does,'" quoted Miss Jane, crisply. Her code allowed no compliments to the face. Then she looked at Betty, and knowing that no vanity had so far spoiled her pet, she added, in a brusque voice, "I cal'late them two youngsters is purty well mated."

"What!" exclaimed Betty, dramatically. "Do I hear a compliment, wrapped, it is true, in a very stern voice? But I can break the shell, like a black walnut, and get the meat within."

"Now may I come down?" asked Lois, in a small, patient tone, as of one who had been "looking pleasant" for a long time.

"Wait, Lois, until I whisk this dust cloth out of sight. It spoils the picture. There, now you may come down!"

Then humming "Hail to the Chief!" she stepped up and gallantly led Lois to the hearth.

Betty's pretty white French flannel, relieved at times by her summer silk, had to do service



on all such occasions. To-night she had allowed herself a few picturesque touches in harmony with the day. In the firelight, her hair shone like burnished copper, and the bunch of crimson holly berries, backed by their polished leaves, only added a deeper tone. Around her neck hung the handsome string of gold beads that had once graced her Grandmother Seabury's "swan-like neck," and now supported a rare and exquisite miniature of the Madonna set in a lovely gold frame, sent as a Christmas gift from Rome by Mr. and Mrs. Anstice. The big bows on her dainty high instep gave a natty touch to her appearance.

"Mother, I've dusted this table at least five times, otherwise —" She broke off abruptly as she glanced around the hall. "Oh, is n't this a love of a home! And absolutely perfect for Christmas!"

"Cousin Betty! Cousin Betty! It's snowing hard!" cried Edwyna, frisking in from the kitchen, where she had been kneeling on a chair by old Katie's table, absorbed in watching the cooking of Christmas dainties.

"Then it is perfect," said Lois, softly, and



Betty thought she caught her looking down at the sparkling ring on her finger.

"Run upstairs and change your dress, dearie," said Betty to Edwyna. "I've put it on a chair, and I'll be there in a minute to button you up. Scamper!"

A moment later there was a loud rap at the door. Betty and Lois made a dash to see which could get there first.

A messenger boy thrust a long paper box into Betty's hands.

"What is it?" cried Lois, for the air was full of Christmas surprises. Edwyna came down the stairs full tilt, buttoning her little dress on the way, to see what had come, for the old brass knocker to-day had the sound of Christmas bells to the wee maid.

"It 's for you, mother, darling!" And Betty, all eagerness, began to help untie the cord.

"Oh! oh!" breathed Betty and Lois, while Edwyna eagerly thrust her head in between them for a closer look, as the cover came off.

There lay twenty-four American Beauty roses, most glorious ones. On them was Mr. Minturne's card.



"It is indeed extremely kind of Mr. Minturne," said Mrs. Baird, holding them out admiringly at arm's length.

"You must wear one, Mrs. Baird," and Lois untwined one from the others.

"Oh, I could n't!" exclaimed Mrs. Baird, blushing like a girl. "I —"

The two girls would not listen, but placed a long-stemmed beauty in the folds of her soft black net gown.

"Father, look, is n't mother beautiful!" Betty called, as soon as Doctor Baird appeared on the landing.

"Your mother has always been beautiful," he replied, as he came down quickly and kissed her.

Barely had they exclaimed in sufficient honor of the flowers when again the thunder of the old knocker started Edwyna on her best-loved task as doorkeeper of "Boxwood."

"It's for me, it's for me!" she cried, dancing around wildly. Then she ran over to the sofa and tore open a small box.

"Oh!"

If eyes as big as saucers, and rounding lips from which flowed a stream of "Oh's!" and



frantic bouncing on the hardy sofa showed joy, then Edwyna was the happiest little girl in all Hobart. In a white box, on which was Tiffany's magic name, reposed, in snowy cotton, the golden coils of a beautiful necklace, with a card expressing Jack's love and best wishes!

"You lucky little cousin, let me put it on you!" Betty clasped it round the pretty neck. "There! Edwyna, it's perfect! Stand off, and let me see how it looks on this lace yoke."

Again and again the knocker rang out. Edwyna had to finish her toilet downstairs, for things were growing too exciting to leave, and at each knock she made a dash for the door.

But the climax came when a book was left for the Doctor from Mr. Minturne. It was a rare edition of one of his favorite Latin authors, which he had expressed a desire to see. He could hardly lay down the quaint little volume long enough to eat his dinner. His comments were unvaried; they all rang on its beauty and his surprise.

"He should not have done it. I merely said I should like to see it when he told me he had recently bought it at an auction in London.



I cannot imagine why he has given me such a handsome gift. True, we had a long talk over our favorite authors, that day he spent with us. He's a fine, cultivated gentleman, well grounded in the classics. Yet I don't understand —"

Then the Doctor would pat the precious book and meditate over its contents. Betty, however, was a little disconcerted at first, but she decided that Mr. Minturne felt as she would in his place, that a man like her father, a true bibliophile, should possess this treasure, rather than one who had it by the accident of wealth and a whim of culture. If Betty detected any sophistry in her reasoning, she wisely allowed it to allay her questioning.

"Oh, daddy darling, this is Christmas Eve, and that explains everything. On such a day surprises are all the more surprising, and nothing must be too surprising, and Christmas all the more Christmasy, and Christmas all the more surprising, and surprises all the more Christmasy, and —"

"Oh, oh!" laughed Lois, as Betty took a long breath before proceeding. "'This is the cow with the crumpled horn, that toss'd the



dog, that worried the cat, that kill'd the rat, that ate the malt, that lay in the house that Jack built!'"

Betty threw her arms around her father and snuggled close to him on the sofa, peeping over his arm to look at the Christmas gift.

To Lois there had come a different reason for Mr. Minturne's splendid gift. She believed that Betty's airy, laughing account of the fire at Minturne Manor, and of her own share in it, had been inadequate, and that her Betty Baird was a heroine. When pressed, Betty had only made light of her part in the affair, and Lois did not feel at liberty to ask Mr. Minturne. So when this costly book came for Doctor Baird, Lois thought: "Now this proves it. He knew he could not offer her a present that would show his appreciation, but to her father and mother he could. And besides, he wants Bet to be happy and takes the best way."

Mrs. Baird, too, had her theory, and it seemed to be a disquieting one, as with questioning eyes she looked time and again at Betty when she would not notice.



Another knock at the door. Again for Edwyna. From Mr. Minturne had come a great box of the very finest, richest, most delicious bonbons a little girl could eat, and with it another small box, in which were tucked two books, one for Betty and one for Lois.

Jack Brooks came soon after dinner, and before long, with a great deal of Christmas mystery and expressive pantomime, he led Betty and Lois away from Dunny and Minturne, who had come with him, and took them into the book-room. Minturne and Dunny insisted on going with them, but Jack shut the door in their faces, and immediately drew from his pocket a pair of handsome gold-rimmed spectacles.

“Young friends,” he began, with an attempt at great propriety, “I’ve never given a lady anything but ‘flowers, books, and sweetmeats.’ I’ve kept strictly to the most approved formula. But now I intend to break loose and give Miss Jane this pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. Will she object?”

“Miss Jane won’t bother over conventionalities, Jack,” said Betty, laughing, “but she



might over the expense you went to. You did n't get them from a bargain counter, did you? For then she would be immensely tickled."

"Cæsar's ghost! A Christmas gift from a bargain counter! That would make the holly turn pale and the Christmas candles blush."

Laughing, they burst out of the room, and Jack made his presentation speech.

"Ach, I dunno w'ether I'm afoot or horse-back!" Miss Jane exclaimed. She adjusted them carefully on her nose and peered through them, trying them on everybody and everything within sight, and greatly delighted to find her vision as keen as of old.

Much to Betty's surprise, she expressed no scruples at their cost. Perhaps it was the glamour of the day; or it may have been a growing insight into the fact that there were people in the world who did not have to count the pennies as pitifully as she had in the Weston days. Even her own thrift was, in Betty's words, on the highroad to ruin, for her sister's Pennsylvania Dutch tea-room was paying well, and Miss Jane was filling missionary barrels for the far West to her heart's content.



Minturne now stepped forward, holding out a small rosewood box.

“Miss Jane, you doctored me so splendidly, at the time of my late shipwreck, that I felt impelled to give you this medicine chest, which I hope will serve well the skill which you so generously bestowed on me.”

“Huh! That was n’t nuthin’. But thank you jes’ the same. This ’ll come in jes’ as handy!”

Later Miss Jane made frames of pine cones for the handsome Christmas cards that came with the young men’s presents, and hung them in a prominent place above her bureau. The girls never went into her room without teasing her about her “conquests,” and the maiden lady took evident pride in the fact that at sixty she had her loyal boy friends.

Every one was remembered by everybody, and old Katie, out in the kitchen, had her side table piled high with useful and ornamental presents, and the sight was so inspiring that she was heard singing her favorite hymns the livelong evening.

The evening was passed quietly around the fire, for those who had been on the historical



ride to New York were tired. Stories were told, ancient carols sung, chestnuts and apples roasted, blind man's buff played; and after Edwyna had gone to bed early, "so Christmas would come sooner," they all popped and strung corn for garlanding her Christmas-tree. Then all worked together to decorate the tree, each outvying the other in the effort to express their gratitude to the little one for giving them another taste of real Christmas, childhood's Christmas. It was pronounced a great success, and all promised to drop in the next day to see Edwyna's joy.

"I think, Miss Betty," said Minturne, in a low tone, "I really must run over to-morrow, while my grandparents are taking their long afternoon nap, to see Edwyna dancing round her tree. And I'll bring an owl I have, to put on the tree to complete her Minerva's outfit."



## XXIV

### MISS SNELL'S VISIT

A FEW days after Christmas Lois received word from her father that he would soon be in New York to take her with him to their home in Maryland, a charming, hospitable old place in the days before Mrs. Byrd's early death, but now deserted save for a kinswoman, Mrs. Chilton, and a few servants. Mr. Byrd's health and business interests had required frequent and prolonged trips to Europe; during these, Lois had stayed with Betty.

Fortunately, after Lois left, Betty had her work at the Studio to occupy her, and things there went along more tranquilly than might have been expected after the stormy beginnings of the partnership. Since the success of Mrs. LeLeche's house, for which she had given Betty the credit, Miss Snell had depended more and more on her judgment. Betty had



the quiet enthusiasm that counts in the long run, a staying power that brings success before it comes to the heavy plodder or the volatile and gushing. The Studio was paying, and when the swiftly recurring interest days came, they were met with a calmness that had not been the case in other years.

One Saturday morning in April, when Betty reached the Studio, she learned that Miss Snell was ill and could not be there that day. She looked after the matters that needed immediate attention, then took a car to call on her before luncheon. She found Miss Snell in a boarding-house, sitting dejectedly in a dreary back room. Betty felt a shock to see her in such surroundings. As she had never been asked to call, she had not been there, and had always pictured her in a comfortable home.

"My nerves have gone all to pieces," Miss Snell said, as she motioned Betty to sit down. "I need rest, but I don't see how in the world I can get it. The noise of the city is driving me nearly crazy."

"It is noisy here," agreed Betty, hardly knowing what to say, as an elevated train thundered along a short distance away.



"Things at the Studio must be upside-down," Miss Snell said fretfully.

"Now, Miss Snell," said Betty, comfortingly, "don't you worry about things at the Studio. Everything is going along there like clock-work, just as well as if you were there yourself. They are all working on the plans you laid out for them yesterday, and there's plenty to keep them busy for to-day, so don't give the Studio another thought, but try to rest."

"Rest!" exclaimed Miss Snell, peevishly. "Oh, yes, that's easy enough to say. How can I rest in this place? I need quiet. But where in the world to go for it I don't know."

Betty felt a great pity for the poor woman. She knew that she had undertaken a work that was beyond her, and that was surely breaking her down. She wished she could do something to help her. An idea came to her, and, after a few minutes' desultory conversation, she arose.

"It is nearing my father's luncheon time, Miss Snell," she explained, "and I want to talk with him about some things before he



goes back to Hobart this evening, so I'll run away now and stop in again this afternoon to see you before I leave."

"Well, good-bye. I hope I'll be well enough on Monday to come to the Studio. If I'm not there you'd better come here, and I'll give you the orders for the day," answered Miss Snell, leaning back wearily on her couch and closing her eyes.

Betty hurried down-town, to Mrs. Gomp's Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant, where she took luncheon with her father regularly every day at one o'clock. She went into the spotless room, and found him sitting in front of the open fire, while the three Dutch women bustled around in hospitable preparations, their prosperity making their smile even broader and kinder than of yore.

"Father," exclaimed Betty, as she dropped into a chair at his side, "Miss Snell is at home, sick. She needs a few days' rest in some quiet place. Could n't we take her home with us to-day and keep her over Sunday? I think it would do her worlds of good. We can telephone to mother and ask her if she is willing. But you know, father, that she will be more



than willing, and with dear mother's care and old Katie's good things to eat, I am sure Miss Snell would be a different woman in a short time."

Doctor Baird turned to Betty, smiling quizzically.

"So you have forgotton, Elizabeth, how she treated you when you were first associated with her?"

"No, indeed, father!" laughed Betty. "Of course I have n't forgotten; but I take my own times for remembering, and this is n't one of them. She is sick and I—well, she needs some one to help her, and I seem to be the only one to do it."

"I am very glad, daughter, that you have this attitude towards her. Yes, we'll telephone to your mother at once, and I am sure she will consent."

Going to the public telephone in the little booth at the side of the room, Dr. Baird was soon in communication with his home. He came out smiling, as though he had good, but not unexpected, news to tell Betty.

"Your mother says we shall bring Miss Snell along, by all means. She, too, thinks it



would do her a great deal of good to be out there for a while."

"I knew she would say yes!" exclaimed Betty, giving her father's arm an affectionate little hug.

"Dinner's ready," said Mrs. Gomp, coming up to them, on her way flicking dustless chairs with a spotless dust cloth. "Now make out your meal," she admonished hospitably, as her daughter put down the steaming potpie.

The idea of going out on Long Island evidently pleased Miss Snell. She grew bright and animated as they packed her bag and rode to the station. The mere prospect of a change had stimulated her, though after a short time the reaction came, and in the train she sank back pale and listless.

Jack happened to be at the station when the train pulled in, and while discreetly concealing his surprise at Betty's guest, and suppressing his teasing spirit, he took them all to the Baird home in his comfortable car.

As the day was gusty and cheerless, Mrs. Baird had a big fire burning on the hearth in the hall. There was an atmosphere of good cheer and kindness in the whole place, and



Miss Snell appeared to fall under its influence, for with a simplicity of manner that was often missing in her approach to strangers, she sank gratefully down into the deep sofa before the fire, saying, with a smile:

"Now I can rest, and I wish Monday was a year off!"

"Make it a week, anyhow, Miss Snell!" cried Betty. "I promise to keep the Studio from walking away!"

"Oh, thank you," she began, and then took off her hat just as Edwyna came forward.

"Allow me, Miss Snell, to carry your hat upstairs," Edwyna said, with an aplomb that made Betty long for Lois to enjoy it with her.

"Thank you, little girl. I wish you would carry my things up for me. I feel it's quite beyond me to climb upstairs. Then run and bring me a glass of water."

Edwyna drew herself up proudly at the off-hand and peremptory order to bring a glass of water, but Mrs. Baird interrupted.

"Would n't you rather have a cup of tea, Miss Snell? The cook is brewing some. It will be ready in a moment."

"Oh, thank you, tea will do very well."



Then she added: "Little girl, you need n't bring me the glass of water."

At these words Betty shot into the book-room. Edwyna surveyed Miss Snell darkly, yet with curiosity. So far her lot had been thrown among unpretentious, courteous people, and now she was divided between anger and wonder at what kind of woman this was.

Katie brought in the tea, and Betty reappeared, though she could not trust herself to look at her cousin. She began her duties as a hostess at once, pouring Miss Snell's tea, and trying in every way to make her feel at home.

Though the beginning of Miss Snell's visit was not especially promising, the next day and those that followed were, on the whole, satisfactory. Each morning, before leaving for the city, Betty saw that Miss Snell had her breakfast in her own room, and on her return she always took her out for a ride in the little basket phaeton, through the pleasant roads that were beginning tentatively to put out spring odors and colors.

Miss Snell's temper was uncertain, and while the bracing air and charming scenes soothed and quieted her, she was still prickly



and difficult to get on with. Here, as in the Studio, Betty never knew whether she was saying or doing the thing that would appease or would ruffle.

“It ’s funny, mother,” she said, on returning home, after taking Miss Snell to the station at the end of the week’s visit, “but I have an entirely different feeling for Miss Snell since she ’s been here. There must be some kind of natural religion in hospitality—and I ’m converted! Yes,” she added, “somehow I understand her, at least for the minute, and maybe I won’t forget when we begin to tussle in the Studio.”

Though Betty’s smile was whimsical and her words lively, in order to hide her feelings, yet the sick, lonely, peevish woman had really found a way into her big heart, and Betty would always see her in a different light.



## XXV

### THIS WAY FOR MARYLAND!

“**T**HIS time to-morrow we'll be in Maryland!” rejoiced Edwyna, spinning dizzily on her tiptoes around the room. “Then there'll be the next day, then the next day, then the day after that Lois'll be married!” she ended, with cumulative days and fervor.

Betty, busily packing, did not answer.

“How many are going with us to-morrow?”

Betty straightened up and glanced significantly at the little pile of clothes Edwyna had dropped on the bed while she indulged in her jubilation.

“Your Aunt Helen, your Cousin Betty, and yourself if this trunk is packed. If not —” Betty looked unutterable things.

Edwyna stopped abruptly and hurriedly dumped the things on the floor beside the trunk and ran to the bureau for more.



"And Mrs. Brooks and Jack, and the Kings, maybe Craig, and of course Judge Lane and Mrs. Lane," Betty added absently, looking around.

"Not Mr. Minturne? I like Mr. Minturne. He always brings me candy."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Minturne, of course," Betty said hastily, and bent down into the trunk.

"Poor Uncle William can't go," sighed Edwyna, sitting on the edge of the bed, as though her sympathy might take the place of good works.

"Come, more things, Lazybones."

Edwyna went again to the bureau, but unluckily she looked out of the window and spied Dottie, and with the stratagem of a fox and the movement of a bird, she had slid down the banisters and was out of the front door before Betty noticed her absence.

Towards the evening of a perfect June day the wedding party were driven between the two tall entrance pillars and up a long grassy roadway to Lois's home.

It was a wide, rambling structure of mellow brick imported from Europe during the colo-



nial period, occupying a delightful site in the midst of a large plantation. The classic round portico of the main building was impressive, and the long low wings with dormer windows, that ran out on each side, were picturesque features, and had evidently been later additions. Indeed, the old-world custom of adding to, instead of tearing down, had been followed by the Byrds, and in consequence their country home was not only handsome, but quaint and interesting.

Rows of orange and lemon trees ornamented the terrace, while shrubberies, heavily perfumed southern flowers, trellised vines, and venerable trees, all had their place on the great estate; a fountain in the rear of the house plashed in the silent afternoon, and pigeons and birds dipped daintily in its cool, shallow pool.

Mr. Byrd, a small, distinguished-looking man, in whose keen genial face could be traced many of the fine qualities that made his daughter so lovable, welcomed them warmly. By his side was old Mrs. Chilton, a distant kinswoman, who lived at Byrd Hall.

While the others were resting after their



long journey, Lois carried Betty off to her favorite spot in the ancient family graveyard, where, under tall sycamores and cedars, in a corner by the hedge, she had slung her gay red hammock. The few level graves, of not later than Revolutionary date, with crumbling headstones, were not neglected, but were treated much as were the trees that shaded them; for the history of the dust within them was only to be found in yellow faded letters in the worm-eaten chests in the attic. So no sadness or mournful association had ever been connected with the little spot in Lois's mind. Perhaps in her light-hearted girlhood the pathos of the place lent an additional charm, even as the one cypress tree did to the scene. Here she had grown in friendship with the birds, who loved its shady silences, far from the treacherous stones of the piccaninnies and the sly attacks of the sleek household cats.

Sitting in the hammock, with their arms around each other, the two girls swung gently to and fro, talking over the months that had passed since they parted, and of the coming wedding.



Betty turned suddenly on Lois.

"I 've just found you out, Lois. You 're an angel! Dunny says so!"

"Well, I 'm glad your eyes have been opened at last," retorted Lois.

"Ever since you left, five solid months ago, I have n't been able to get a word out of him about anybody or anything but you."

Lois smiled gayly, without giving the least evidence of compunction at being the cause of Betty's limited conversational opportunities.

"Well, Betty, dear, I should think that Jack, Craig, Paul, and this Laurence Minturne would have helped you a little to escape from your martyrdom."

"Oh, they have. But you know I see very little of Paul now, and Craig is so busy with his studies, while Jack — well, you know he's Dunny's best friend, and he has n't helped to vary the conversation a great deal."

"No? And how about Mr. Minturne? I never dreamed you 'd be so secretive, Betty."

Betty suddenly stood up and became deeply interested in an epitaph on one of the oldest headstones and made no reply.

"So you 've decided not to have any ushers,



Lois?" she said presently, and Lois rose at once to the bait, as she hoped.

"Yes, for I want everything to be as simple and natural as possible. The wedding party and the friends who are coming from Washington and Baltimore will know where to sit, in the front pews, and as all the people in this neighborhood are employed on our estate here, they will just drop in as they do on Sundays."

"I like your idea of having everything simple, and that's why I didn't want to be your maid of honor. It would make everything too elaborate."

"You know, Betty, I was baptized and confirmed in this church, and my ancestors before me, so I want it characteristic of my home life rather than fashionable; and that's the reason, too, I want the church decorated with daisies instead of American Beauty roses."

"Yes, we can all go out to-morrow and pick them. That will be so much nicer than having a florist furnish them."

The next morning Mrs. Chilton was sitting on the deep, wide, cool gallery at the rear of the house, putting strips of whalebone into sun-



bonnets, when Betty came up from the garden, her hands full of roses and honeysuckle.

"I have had all the sunbonnets in the house washed. Some of them are half a century old. You can have a pink one or a blue one or a white one to pick your daisies in," laughed Mrs. Chilton.

"Are n't they dear and old-fashioned!" Betty exclaimed, perching a pale blue one jauntily on her head. It was small and dainty, edged with a narrow ruffle.

"I choose this pink one," cried Lois, strolling in with Dunmore, followed by Jack and Minturne, whom Betty had left smoking by the sundial.

Dunny placed the pink bonnet on Lois's head as if adjusting a crown of diamonds.

"There!" he cried proudly. "I defy Watteau and Claude Lorrain together to match this pastoral scene!" he added, his glance taking in Betty and her sunbonnet and the wide sweep of a rich, mellow landscape.

"I want to be in this picture!" cried Mary King, stepping through one of the long windows that opened out on the porch and gayly



seizing on a white bonnet with a little fluted pink edging.

"So do I!" And Alexander King topped his big tawny head with a brilliant scarlet bonnet; but Dunmore snatched it off, protesting that he would not have his picture spoilt.

"I have to be very careful, for my complexion is so delicate that I can wear only the softest tints," Jack explained, adorning his locks first with one, then with another, finally selecting a saffron-colored one, as best harmonizing with his tanned skin.

"Come, ladies and gentlemen, it's time to pick the 'sun-eyed daisies' before it's too hot!" cried Mr. Byrd, coming towards them. "Where is your mother, Betty?"

"There she is, down there at the fountain with Mrs. Brooks."

"Judge Lane is to bring Mrs. Lane in a carriage, as she would not be able to walk so far. My servants will bring plenty of baskets for the flowers. So let us be going."

All the women wore sunbonnets, even Mrs. Brooks, much to Edwyna's conventional wonder. She thought they were all rather wild



and silly, and should be content to wear broad-brimmed Parisian sun hats.

Alexander King was in his element, and he and Jack kept the others in a gale of laughter with their sparring and repartee, though the older ladies at times forgot their errand in serious consultations over the details of the wedding.

Without a qualm, Lois and Dunmore left their plans in the loving hands of their friends, and gave themselves up to the glory of the day and the realization of the momentous fact that they were gathering flowers to decorate the church for their own wedding! They were often silent and thoughtful, but were ready to join in any merry nonsense.

After luncheon they all sat on the marble steps and made ropes of daisies, which they carried to the church and twined around the dark old pillars. They fastened great loose bunches of daisies to the pew doors, and banked them in the deeply cased windows, where they sprang up elastically, as if in their own fields.

And then they left the church, all beautiful and fair for to-morrow.



## XXVI

### THE GYPSIES

“**I** CAN’T stand it!” said Betty to herself, half aloud. She sprang up from the chair by the window where she had been sitting since coming home from the church. Her mother, Lois, and Mrs. Lane were talking quietly in the next room, and overseeing Aunt Harriet, the old family nurse, who was packing Lois’s trunks.

Betty tiptoed across the hall, past the billiard-room where the men were trying to while away the remainder of the afternoon with desultory games, down the low steps, and ran to the open door. There she found Edwyna, with My Nerva and the owl lying in her relaxed arms, dozing elegantly though unmistakably in the wicker chair Lois had brought down from the attic. It had been Lois’s own little chair — and now Lois was to be married to-morrow!



Betty stooped over and kissed Edwyna gently.

"Poor little thing, she is taking her afternoon nap," she thought. "Edwyna!" she whispered.

Edwyna was wide awake in a second.

"What is it, Cousin Betty?" she asked, putting her arms lovingly around Betty's neck and drawing her face down to kiss her. She was never too sleepy or too tired or too elegant to brighten into her own sweet natural little self when Cousin Betty came near.

"Don't speak loud, for I want to steal away without any one knowing, and I want you to go with me."

"May I take My Nerva? She'd be lonely in this strange place."

"Yes, do. We'll get the pony and drive and drive and drive!"

"Why, Cousin Betty!" exclaimed Edwyna, wonderingly. She thought she detected a sob in Betty's voice.

"Hush! Come this way."

With the help of a little darky, they hitched up the pony to the low-swung basket phaeton, and were soon travelling leisurely through the



tree-arched roads, and over the gentle hills and picturesque stone bridges of the Byrd estate.

Silently they drove along, Betty thinking, in spite of herself, of the separation coming the next day, though there was a prescience of happiness in the very air, joy in the songs of the birds, and fragrance everywhere.

Now and then Edwyna looked at her cousin, but she understood that she wished to be silent, so she could only admire the yellow roses in her belt and touch them lightly to draw Betty's attention.

"I've come out to be miserable, Edwyna," Betty said, all at once, brushing away a tear, but smiling too. "I came out to complain and to give myself up to unmitigated unhappiness."

"You've known Lois a great, great many years, have n't you, Cousin Betty?" asked Edwyna, in a consolatory voice, trying to carry on the flagging conversation.

"Oh, not more than five centuries, Edwyna, dear!" smiled Betty. "I was so happy when she came to 'The Pines' that day, to be my roommate. I gave her half the hooks in the closet, but she had so many dresses that she



needed more, and I gave her more, as I did n't need all of my half, but she made me feel rich with my made-over dress. I knew better, but I pretended with her, and we were perfectly happy. But it's all over now!"

Edwyna began to cry.

"What in the world are you crying for, Edwyna? Lois is n't going to die!"

"But you cried, Cousin Betty," said Edwyna, defensively.

"Yes, but that's different. I'm growing maudlin with age," she laughed. "I'll soon take to snuff, like old Aunt Harriet. Now we'll go home by a beautiful little stream."

She turned the pony and began to sing:

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,  
And merrily hent the stile-a:  
A merry heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a.'"

They passed a low embankment, covered with violet petunias, white candytuft, and dwarf sunflowers, which enclosed a deserted house.

"That's a quaint, ramshackle place," said Betty, examining it with interest. As she turned forward again, she was startled to find a gypsy encampment by the brook.



Four or five white tents stood in the glen, and a bevy of laughing, quarrelling children played by the stream; their mothers, dressed in black, but with yellow or pigeon-blood red aprons and neckerchiefs, were preparing supper over little open fires on the greensward. Back of the tents were several large wagons, and beyond, in the open meadow, a number of well-conditioned horses roamed at will and cropped the sweet grass.

Betty's first impulse was to turn and fly. She had childish memories of gypsies stealing children, and she instinctively took Edwyna in one arm. The road, however, was too narrow to turn there, and she had to go on. A facetious saying of her father's flashed into her mind, that it was best to propitiate the evil spirits because the good ones wouldn't hurt you. She determined to test its truth. She bowed pleasantly to the gypsies and was driving by, when a buxom young woman came up to them.

"Have your fortune told, lady?" she asked.

"No, thank you, not to-day," Betty answered, driving on.

The girl, however, was by the side of the phaeton, looking at her with merry black eyes.



Her black hair was plaited down her back and ornamented by a high amber comb, and big gold hoops hung from her ears. In spite of her barbaric dress and the cunning expression of her eyes, there was something almost noble in her presence. She laughed easily and heartily, apparently from the exuberance of healthy spirits, showing her strong white teeth; her sun-browned cheeks grew red, and altogether she presented a splendid picture. Several small children, shy but good-natured, clung to her dress, and from their stronghold eyed the strangers boldly.

"Come, let me cross your palm with silver," the gypsy said cajolingly.

"If I must," sighed Betty, smiling, and handing down a twenty-five cent piece.

"I see two young men," the gypsy began, in a sing-song voice.

"One is dark and one is fair; both love me, and one is jealous," finished Betty, amused at the stereotyped prophecy. She had really expected more originality from this handsome creature.

The prophetess threw a mischievous smile at Betty, then grew sternly solemn.



"I see but one man. He stands alone. He is tall, handsome, neither dark nor fair. He loves you. He has a grand home —"

"Why not a castle?" interrupted Betty, knowing the gypsy love of foretelling untold material grandeur. "It might just as well be a castle, and would be more romantic."

"It is a castle," the gypsy maid assured her. "That 's a grand home, surely."

"Good!" Betty turned to Edwyna. "It 's the Baird Castle."

"There 's no use in my trying, if you don't believe in my second sight," said the girl, offended by Betty's unconcealed incredulity, or at least professing to be.

"Now, how could I believe in it?" asked Betty, yet smiling in a friendly way.

"I see a castle; I see it," reasserted the girl, stubbornly.

"So do I," said Betty, laughing. "Thank you for your good wishes. Now we must go. Here are some pennies for the children," and she scattered a handful on the road and laughed to see them scramble for them.

As Betty leaned over to give one to a wee tot who had not been able to compete with his



big, hardy elders, Mr. Minturne on horseback came dashing around the bend in the road. He pulled up his horse suddenly.

Tall, straight, with a face not easily forgotten because of its strength and high breeding; proud, yet not vain, though bearing unconsciously in his carriage the ancestral marks of those who had been proud of their place in the world and of their power and influence, he was a man of notable distinction.

In the pony phaeton sat Betty, winsome and merry, dressed in white, her golden-brown head close to the blue-black mane of the young gypsy, as she bent over to give out her pennies; Edwyna, awe-struck, her doll hugged to her breast, clinging to Betty; the tall commanding figure of the young gypsy woman, with her blood-red shawl, great hoop earrings, orange petticoat, and general barbaric splendor; the gypsy encampment, the old women in strange attire, holding rollicking children; on the banks of the stream two old men fishing; over all, the warm balmy air, the sound of the brook, and the leafy archway of trees throwing shadows on the yellow road.

“Why, Mr. Minturne!” exclaimed Betty,



looking up suddenly from her gift making. Her face grew bright with welcome. Then she tried to hide its warmth by a studied indifference.

The gypsy gazed intently at the man, then back at Betty. A smile crept into her dark eyes.

"Arcadia!" Minturne cried, vaulting off his horse.

Betty caught the significant expression in the gypsy's eyes and her teasing yet good-natured smile.

"It's time to go home," she said, a little formally. She nodded coolly to the gypsy, but laughed as the babies, tumbling on the soft grass, waved frantic farewells with their chubby hands. She threw them kisses and more pennies as she turned away, but kept her eyes determinedly from meeting those of the gypsy maid.

As Betty and Edwyna drove up to the portico, with Minturne riding beside them on the thoroughbred, they found Jack standing alone by one of the pillars, smoking his companionable pipe. He gave them a quick, searching glance. He saw that something out of the



ordinary had happened. He could see that Betty was greatly disturbed, though he could not discern that she was both disturbed and frightened by Minturne's look, the hint in the gypsy's eyes, and at her own warmth of welcome. She felt that the world had had a new twist since she started out to forget the one Lois's coming marriage had given it.

"The world's all right, Betty," said Jack, as she passed him with a troubled countenance, scarcely returning his cheery greeting.

"I didn't expect that from you, Jack Brooks," she replied, much to his mystification.

They were much alike in temperament, and had been true comrades, too well satisfied with the present to anticipate the future unnecessarily. It was the time for hearty friendship, and both had a gift amounting to talent for loyal true friendships, that nothing could change and nothing weaken. While this was a bond between them it was at the same time a stumbling-block to the hopes the friends of both had for them.

With unusual keenness Jack had penetrated Minturne's secret. He was not surprised. Naturally every one would love Betty.



As for jealousy, well, Jack was not in the least a dog in the manger; besides, he felt he could well afford to be generous, as he knew — or thought he knew — that Betty's mind and heart were not concerned in the slightest with love and marriage. He believed that his good comrade, Betty, was, like himself, happy in the gay present, satisfied and contented with conditions as they were. However, he knew that Minturne was a man of purpose, of quick and determined action, a man who had accomplished much for his years, and who would not dally long in his wooing.

Then, perhaps for the first time in his happy, care-free twenty-one years, Jack felt his heart grow heavy. No one had ever meant as much to him as Betty, and now Betty — He emptied his pipe, pounding it meditatively against the palm of his left hand, and stalked frowningly into the house to dress for dinner, and incidentally to have a look at that man Minturne!

Lois and Betty had planned to devote a part of this last evening to minstrelsy. Since their early girlhood, when The Order of The Cup was founded, they had lost none of their



love for the old troubadours and the songs of the knightly era. To-night they would have the songs of the South, led by some of the ancient retainers of the Byrd family.

A splendid feature of the house was a curving balcony, with beautiful balustrade, which connected the two stairways on the level of the second floor. This the girls had named The Minstrel Gallery, and here Lois had called together the musicians of the plantation, who, in honor of the occasion, had achieved something not unlike the motley or harlequin costumes of old.

There was white-haired Pompey, with his beloved guitar, who never failed to tell visitors that he had been one of Washington's body servants, though he invariably forgot to tell them that he was but eighty years of age; Julius Caesar, his frivolous son of nearly sixty, with his yellow fiddle plentifully covered with rosin dust; and George Washington Jackson, the patriarch of them all, with his tinkling banjo. Swaying back and forth, as though in ecstasy, and keeping time by thunderous beats of their huge feet, the picturesque trio led the company in song.



Lois and Dunny stood a moment alone in the shadowy hall, and tears came to Lois's eyes as she thought of those days gone forever, when her mother, whom she could not remember, and her father had lived and loved in this very home.

"Lois!" pleaded Dunny.

"It 's the past, Dunny. It seems to flit back with the candle light and the rhythm of the music. My mother —" But Lois could not continue.

"I know, sweetheart," comforted Dunny. "But I 'll try to make a happy present and future for you, though I —"

"Oh, Dunny, I'm happy, happy, happy!"

Before Dunny could answer with more than a pressure of the hand, Jack and Minturne came down the stairs together. They did n't seem to have much to say to each other. Looking around, Lois saw Mrs. Baird coming down the other stairway, alone.

"Why, where 's Betty?" Lois exclaimed, going forward to meet her.

"Edwyna 's determined to be resplendent to-night, and Betty is helping her to dress. It seems to be difficult to suit her fastidious taste."



There was a rustle and the sound of quick steps, and they all turned to see Betty, clasping Edwyna by the hand, coming down the stairway, holding up the train of her filmy white gown. Edwyna fluttered by her side in pink.

Minturne was at the foot of the steps in an instant, holding out a hand to Edwyna and jumping her down the last two steps, and asking Betty for the first waltz. Jack caught Dunny's eye, and the two friends walked away and talked for a moment on the portico, while Betty and Minturne joined Mrs. Baird and Lois.

"He's in dead earnest," commented Jack.

"And Betty?"

"Who knows!"

"If it is n't you, Jack, I hope it will be Minturne. He's a man all through. And I'm afraid, old fellow, if I can judge from what Lois says, that it will be Minturne."

"Well, Dunny, you know she and I have been the best friends in the world, but without any sentimentality. Yet it will go kind of hard."



## XXVII

### LOIS'S WEDDING

**I**N carriages, on foot through the shady paths, and on horseback, even in the pillion fashion of old, came the guests from the surrounding country to Lois's wedding.

The little ancient cruciform church peeped out through its mantle of dark English ivy at the golden sunlit world. Its silent interior was dim and cool, yet glowed here and there with bits of color from the rich stained glass, the golden cross and candlesticks, and the richly embroidered altar-cloth.

The sacristan, an old family friend, had seen to it that the venerable church had been swept and dusted until scarcely a mote swam in the rays of sunshine that filtered into the chancel; and no hand but his had been allowed to arrange the flowers on the gradine and to bank the fragrant white roses and palms at the sides of the altar.



As the guests entered, they stepped on a marble floor that might well have reminded them of the lines from George Herbert:

“Mark you the floore? that square & speckled stone  
Which looks so firm and strong,  
Is *Patience*.

“And th’ other black and grave, wherewith each one  
Is checker’d all along,  
*Humilitie.*”

While they were being seated, the vested choir, led by a boy soprano with a voice of thrilling beauty, sang “Oh, for the Wings of a Dove!”

Lois, leaning on her father’s arm, passed down the garlanded aisle, and met Dunmore before the altar. As she stood there at his side, before the venerable clergyman who had baptized her and instructed her for confirmation, her veil of tulle and old lace falling over her simple yet rich satin gown, it seemed to Betty that there never could have been a more beautiful bride.

On the return from the church Lois and Dunmore alighted from their carriage at the entrance gateway, and walked up the shadowed road, between the lines of children



whom Lois had known from their infancy. They sang their songs of love and good wishes and strewed the path of the bride with fresh wild flowers and roses, symbolically thornless, to the rambling old house that had looked down the long avenue at many a brilliant wedding-party walking up to its welcoming doors. Yes, it had looked down that avenue for more than two centuries; and now came Lois Byrd; and of all the brides the old house had smiled upon, none had been fairer or more beloved.

The wedding breakfast passed all too quickly, and before the guests were aware of anything unusual — Betty protested that it was magic — Mr. and Mrs. Lane had disappeared. There were great hurryings to and fro, and gay searching parties, but all of no avail. The bride and bridegroom had stolen away on their wedding journey, leaving the rice and the old shoes and all the well-wishes on the hands of the gay tricksters.

Betty and Minturne stood by the fountain, watching the doves dip into its water, then whisk out, shaking from their iridescent necks



and snowy wings the tiny drops that splashed merrily back again. After Lois's departure Betty had hurried to this pleasant spot to be alone, and Minturne, walking through the many interwinding paths, had been led there by a glimpse of Betty's white gown as she ran down the steps to the flower garden.

They did not talk much, but musingly watched the dainty birds, turning easily from them to speak of the fragrance of the jessamine near by, of the perfect day with its cloudless sky, of the bride and bridegroom and the church, of the doves fluttering in mid-air, whose wings seemed to Betty's fancy like the petals of the water-lilies that swam in the pool.

"By the way, Miss Betty, your Scottish castle is to be sold," Minturne remarked, with an airy ease and a spontaneity that his eyes somehow belied.

"Oh!" cried Betty, impulsively, straightening up with a movement of surprise. "Then my poor eagles will be wanderers again!"

"It's too bad!" deplored Minturne.

"'Bad!'" repeated Betty. "Isn't there something we can do to prevent those eagles being driven from their 'immemorial crags'?"



Minturne was silent.

"How did you learn that it was to be sold?" persisted Betty, determined to stick to the safe subject of the eagles.

"I received a letter from a friend who lives not far from there. He said the castle was about to be offered for sale by the present owner. I wrote to him for more information, and a day or two ago I received this."

Minturne handed her an agent's list of estates for sale.

Betty took the pamphlet gayly.

"There is the castle! And there are the crags!"

"Let me see those 'immemorial crags,'" he demanded laughingly.

He glanced at the picture as Betty held it out to him, but his eyes wandered from it to her bright, winsome face.

"Would n't you think they'd have some eagles flying around?" she queried, studying the view intently, perhaps too intently to be altogether convincing.

"Maybe they don't feel at liberty to throw in the eagles, since they belong only to the Bairds," he suggested, smiling.



"Those poor eagles! 'After a fidelity of five centuries,'" she quoted from the wordy legend, "to be turned out into a cold and unfriendly world at a moment's notice! I wonder where they will go."

"Perhaps they 'll come to America."

"I suppose we could n't call on the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to take this in hand, could we?" she suggested.

Minturne made no reply.

As they had seemed apart from the rest of the world when riding back to the manor on the night of the fire, so it was now, in this summer's day, in this old southern garden. The day was warm and still, the air heavy with the sweet odors of flowers; the mazarine-blue sky above them, the sun scarcely breaking through the trellised roses and jessamines that formed a screen at the back of the marble seat where they two sat alone by the fountain.

"I must talk about the eagles," Betty found herself thinking. She feared she said it aloud.

"Now, surely," she began, with heightened color, her eyes fastened on the picture as if her life depended on it, "you should be able — I mean — oh, why don't you — Now, here



is this castle, beloved by the eagles and rightfully theirs, and no one is willing to lift a finger to save it for them!"

Betty glanced up, then turned again to the picture, while the color fled from her face.

Minturne bent close to her.

"There 's a way to save the eagles, Betty."

Her head went lower, while her cheeks crimsoned from his look, his words, and the intensity of his low tone.

Minturne clasped the picture and the hand that held it in both of his.

"Betty, I —"

"Cousin Betty, it 's time to get ready for the train, Aunt Helen says," broke in Edwyna's voice. "Why, Cousin Betty, what makes you so red?"

Without replying, Betty sprang to her feet and made her way to the house at a pace that compelled Edwyna to trot, and even Minturne to lengthen his long strides.

"Were you cross at Mr. Minturne, Cousin Betty?" whispered Edwyna, as they hurried along; but Betty only shook her head.

A week or so later, as Betty was tucking Edwyna into bed, she leaned over and kissed



her good-night. Then she kissed her again, and once more began the tucking-in of the bedclothes, though there was not a loophole left to close. Evidently Betty had something on her mind, something to tell little Edwyna which she found hard to say. Kneeling by the bedside, and burying her cheek in the pillow, she answered that unanswered question of Edwyna's, which the child had propounded by the fountain in Maryland, by asking another.

"Edwyna, would you like to have a new cousin?"

The little arms flew from under the carefully tucked-in covers.

"Cousin Betty!"

She pulled Betty's head down close, asking, in a delighted whisper:

"Cousin Laurence?"

Betty sprang up, laughing and blushing furiously.

"Gracious, Edwyna, you're a witch! How did you guess Yes," she added, as she hurried towards the door, "it was 'Cousin Laurence' at first sight!"











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